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POEMS BY ARTHUR SYMONS.

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VOLUME II.

LONDON : WILLIAM HEINEMANN.
1902.

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Amoris Victima.

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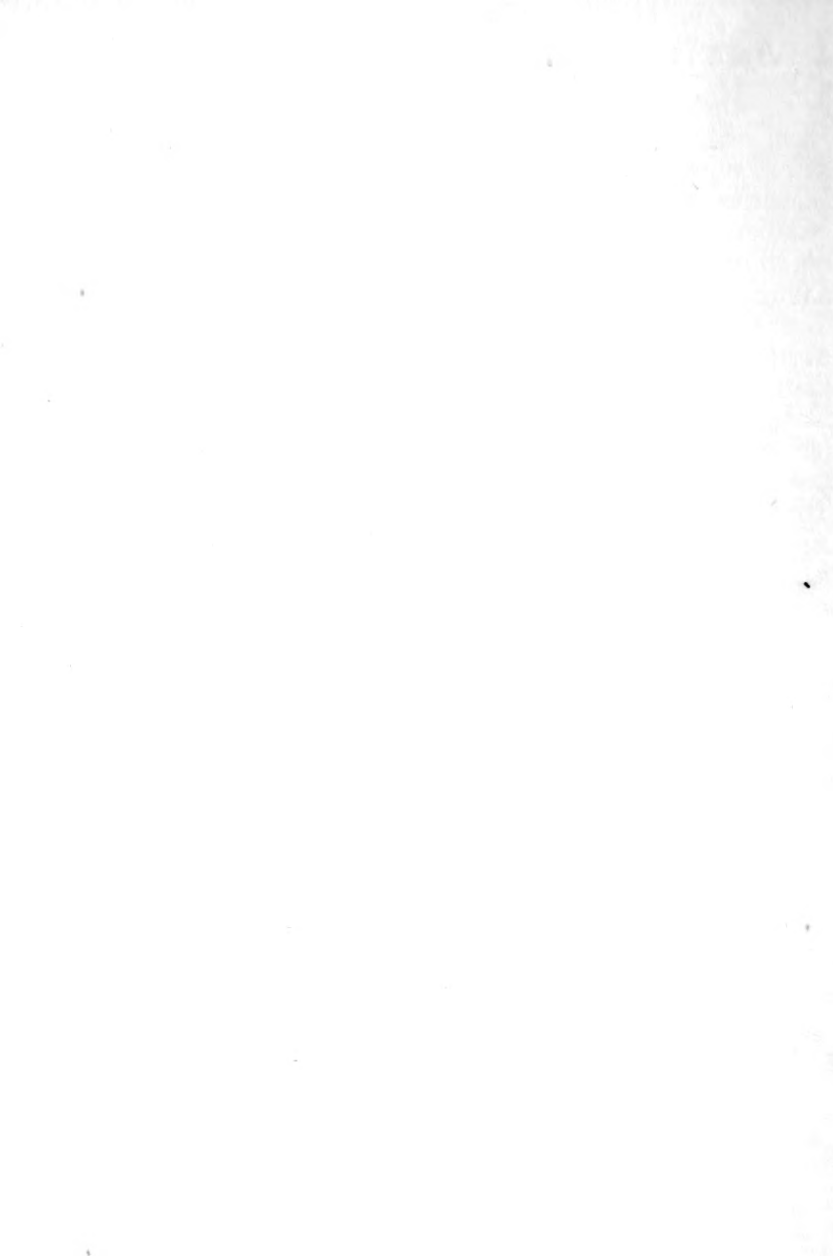
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AMORIS VICTIMA.

VOL. II—A



I. Amoris Victima.

I.

He who has entered by this sorrow's door
Is neither dead nor living any more.
Nothing can touch me now, except the cold
Of whitening years that slowly make youth old ;
Hunger, that makes the body faint ; one thought
That ends all memory ; for the future, nought.
My future ended yesterday ; I have
Only a past, on this side of the grave.
For I have lost you, and you fill the whole
Of life now lost ; and I have lost my soul,
Because I have no part or lot in things
That were to be immortal : grave-mould clings
About my very thoughts ; and love's dead too.
All that I know of love I learnt of you.

II.

All that I know of love I learnt of you,
And I know all that lover ever knew,
Since, passionately loving to be loved,
The subtlety of your wise body moved
My senses to a curiosity,
And your wise heart adorned itself for me.
Did you not teach me how to love you, how
To win you, how to suffer for you now,
Since you have made, as long as life endures,
My very nerves, my very senses, yours ?
I suffer for you now with that same skill
Of self-consuming ecstasy, whose thrill
(May Death some day the thought of it remove !)
You gathered from the very hands of Love.

III.

Is it this weary and most constant heart,
Or only these unquiet nerves, that start
And tremble if I do but think of you ?
I know not, but I would to God I knew.
Had I not once a half-delicious grief,
When I believed in you against belief ?
But now, when I must doubt your word, your kiss,
When each remembered rapture murmurs " This
Was when she lied, and this was when she lied,"
Yet even doubt is by some doubt denied ;
Now, when the madness comes down like a flood,
Poisoning the honest currents of my blood,
Is it desire, love, or this madness, most
That aches in me, to know that you are lost ?

IV.

I know that you are lost to me, and yet
I will not think it. If I could but get
This too obsequious heart out of your power
For one forgetting and contracted hour,
This heart that from remembrance has not won
Oblivion or even rebellion !
I must not think : there's safety that one way.
I must not think of you, not even to say
" I have forgotten." I will think of—who ?
All other women, since they are not you !
Ah ! but that's weakness : can I not be strong,
As you are, in your rage to do me wrong ?
O ! lest I hate you, let my love have power,
For love's sake, to forget you for one hour !

V.

Love turns to hate, they say ; and surely I
Have cause enough to hate you till I die.
Do you not hate me ? must I not hate you ?
Show me the way it's done, and I'll outdo
Your bravest. But what's this ? If I surprise,
Not tears, in those inexorable eyes ?
Ah ! by those tears, think not that we shall bring
So dear a love to be an outcast thing.
Love turns to hate : I would it turned to hate !
We were not then so wholly desolate.
You will not let me love you ; yet now, see,
If hate be not impossibility.
What shall we do, O God in heaven above,
Who cannot hate, and yet who may not love ?

VI.

I cannot do without you : you have been
Too long my only slave, my only queen.
I cannot do without you : you have grown
Part of my flesh, and nearer than my own.
I need you ! Speak, be silent, frown or smile,
Only be with me for a little while,
And let your face and hands and hair be kissed,
And let me feel your fingers on my wrist.
I cannot do without you. Other men
Love, bid good-bye, and turn to love again ;
I only know I want you, only you,
Only because I want you. If you knew
How much I want you ! If you knew how much
I hunger, should I hunger, for your touch ?

VII.

Dare I remember, nay, can I forget,
(Would God I could forget them all, and yet
Thank God for this the most, I have not the power !)
Of all the hours of all our love one hour ?
It is my glory, as it is my curse,
(Loveliest, best loved out of the universe !)
To have loved, to have been beloved by you, above
All other loving women, made for love.
No woman ever loved me as you loved,
And now that you have from my brows removed
The heavy crown of love, and cast it down,
I cannot stoop to wear a lighter crown.
Having been crowned by you, I abdicate
Kingship; and join the beggars at your gate.

VIII.

In those mysterious jewels of your eyes,
Wrought with vain truths, and wrought with vainer lies,
When passion made me wizard, I have read,
And turned away, blind with exceeding dread.
I never knew you ; you could give your whole
Heart's life, but not the silence of your soul ;
I never knew you when you loved me most,
And now that you are that unquiet ghost,
Part of the very element of fire,
A breath, a flame, a shadow of desire,
I know that I shall never ravel out
The vision from the shadowy veils of doubt ;
For is it not the pure alone are wise
To read the wizard beryl of your eyes ?

IX.

I cannot work : I dare not sit alone.
There's not a corner here that has not known
Some moment of you, and your pictured eyes
Pursue me with relentless memories.
Here was the chair you sat in ; here we lay
Until your face grew fainter with the day,
And, in a veil of kisses, swooning white,
Fell back into the mystery of night.
'Twas here I kissed you first ; 'twas there you said,
" I love you," and, " Would God that I were dead !"
And now, when you are gone for evermore,
I pace between the window and the door,
And, in the feverish folly of despair,
Stand listening for your step upon the stair.

X.

The white foam rushes back into the night
Of waters ; far behind, I see the light
Of ships that come from England ; and the sky
Blots out the world beyond. Would God that I
Could so blot out the past I hurry from
Into oblivion and a little foam,
And make for new horizons, as our ship
Sets forward, with the stars for fellowship !
O woman, am I not, for this one hour
Of triumphing waters, freer of your power ?
You, lost and left, with England, far behind
The spacious freedom of the sea and wind,
Is it not as a ghost you come to me
Across the wind and moonlight of the sea ?

XI.

I have endured a week's oblivion
Of foreign faces, I have seen the dawn
Blush through veiled windows, and not vainly sought
Refuge from your intolerable thought.
Now, as I tread these London streets again,
There grows up softly, from the night and rain,
The same old ghostly haunting of your eyes ;
And the old poisonous mist of memories
Rises about me, and the old desire
Quickens along my veins in sharper fire.
O ! I am lost, you will not set me free,
Unless I turn again, and seek the sea,
Some vague-new world of waters, bounded by
The soft and sudden barrier of the sky.

XII.

This is Love's ghost that I have met to-day.
These are the same eyes, and the voice that speaks
The very voice, and those the very cheeks ;
And yet, O God ! how faint, how far away !
Out of another world you come to me,
And hollow, hollow, hollow as the tomb
Sound the indifferent words that speak my doom ;
And hollow, hollow, hollow, can it be
My voice that sounds so strangely in my ears ?
You bid me speak, and I, in dumb despair,
Forgetting all my agonies of prayer,
Beckon to you across a mist of tears.
All's over now : I know that you are lost,
And love is dead, for I have met Love's ghost.

XIII.

And yet, there was a hunger in your eyes,
Once, when you turned upon me suddenly ;
And suddenly you turned away from me,
Once, when, evoking other memories,
I said, " You hate me : answer : do you not
Hate me ? " and in your silence then I heard
The ruined echo of another word,
Love, Love, that wailed and would not be forgot.
And once you laughed, that laugh I understand,
Sadder than tears, a broken little laugh,
As if a sob had shivered it in half.
And once, when, pausing, I had laid my hand
Upon your hand my hand could always thrill,
The fingers stirred : ah ! they remember still.

XIV.

The way of all transgressors is not hard,
As mine is. Other men have lightly sinned,
And joyously accepted their reward ;
And memory, whistling as an idle wind,
Sang nothing in their ears to follow them
Down the despairing hollows of their nights ;
Yet something burns my heart out like a flame
If I but think on those foregone delights.
Why should I suffer, since I did the wrong ?
God knows that I repent not. Why should I
Suffer ? Take courage, feeble heart, be strong,
Poor heart that whimpers like a cur. O why,
In futile and dishonourable pain,
Moan on the grave of love that you have slain ?

II. Amoris Exsul.

I. Moonrise.

I am weary of living, and I long to rest
From the sorrowful and immense fatigue of love ;
I have lived and loved with a seeking, passionate zest,
And weariness and defeat are the end thereof.

I have lived in vain, I have loved in vain, I have lost
In the game of Fate, and silently I retire ;
I watch the moon rise over the sea, a ghost
Of burning noontides, pallid with spent desire.

II. Loss.

What have I lost in losing you?
Only the savour of all things.
In the same sky the same bird sings,
The same clouds darken in the blue;
Only, all's changed, in losing you!

In losing you, I lose the care
That held me fettered all my days;
I see before me bright new ways
That beckon me, I know not where;
And yet I do not greatly care.

For I have lost, in losing you,
Not you alone, but my own youth,
My hope in fame, my faith in truth,
And all I was to be and do,
And life itself, in losing you!

III. In the Bay.

The sea-gulls whiten and dip,
Crying their lonely cry,
At noon in the blue of the bay;
And I hear the slow oars drip,
As the fisherman's boat drifts by,
And the cuckoo calls from the hillside far away.

The white birds cry for the foam,
O white birds crying to me
The cry of my heart evermore,
By perilous seas to roam
To a shore far over the sea,
And I would that my ship went down within sight of the shore!

IV. The Rat.

Pain gnaws at my heart like a rat that gnaws at a beam
In the dusty dark of a ghost-frequented house;
And I dream of the days forgotten, of love the dream,
The desire of her eyes unappeased, and the peace of her brows.

I can hear the old rat gnaw in the dark by night,
In the deep overshadowing dust that the years have cast;
He gnaws at my heart that is empty of all delight,
He stirs the dust where the feet of my dreams had passed.

V. In the Forest of Arques.

Why am I haunted by your hands?
O subtle and mesmeric palms,
That had the power of what strange calms,
Only my spirit understands;
And you, faint fingers thrilling through
With feverish ecstasies subdued
Into the quiet of your mood,
Why is it that I dream of you?

Exiled and outcast, and resigned
To be forgotten, to forget,
Why is it there should one regret
With one desire possess my mind?
That, in these unfamiliar lands,
After the exile and the change,
You might but soothe me with the strange
Familiar comfort of your hands!

VI. Foreshadowings.

It was your silence that I loved,
Musical pauses of a fine
Remoter harmony that moved
Across your spirit's boundary line.

Ah! in what visions have I heard,
Musical lips, eloquent eyes,
How many a song without a word,
Divine demands, subtle replies!

All that Love ever had to say
Your eyes have said to me, in vain.
Hopeless, estranged, unchanged, to-day
Without a word we meet again.

VII. Love and Sleep.

I have laid sorrow to sleep,
Love sleeps.
She who oft made me weep
Now weeps.

I loved, and have forgot,
And yet
Love tells me she will not
Forget.

She it was bid me go;
Love goes
By what strange ways, ah! no
One knows.

Because I cease to weep,
She weeps:
Here by the sea in sleep,
Love sleeps.

VIII. Twilight.

The pale grey sea crawls stealthily
Up the pale lilac of the beach ;
A bluer grey, the waters reach
To where the horizon ends the sea.

Flushed with a tinge of dusky rose,
The clouds, a twilit lavender,
Flood the low sky, and duskier
The mist comes flooding in, and flows

Into the twilight of the land,
And darkness, coming softly down,
Rustles across the fading sand
And folds its arms about the town.

IX. Remembrance.

It seems to me that very long ago,
Across a shining and dividing sea,
I dreamed of love, and the eternal woe,
And that desire which is eternity.

I did but dream that I have made you weep :
I never loved, and you have never wept ;
The shining and dividing sea is deep,
And I am very tired of having slept.

Yet, in some hours of these oblivious days,
Suddenly, like a heart-throb, I recall
The passionate enigma of your face,
I take your hand, and I remember all.

X. Sleepless Night.

I cannot sleep, the slow hours steal
Lingering on a path of sighs;
All night against my sight I feel
The presence of her lips, her eyes.

Out of the empty night appear
All I have loved and feared and fled:
Those eyes that I most love and fear,
Those lips I most desire and dread.

Her eyes are strange to me, they smile
An older alien smile, not mine;
Her lips are laughing to beguile
My senses with a sorcerous wine.

Deep in the darkness of the night
She wavers to a fresh disguise;
Yet still there burns against my sight
The radiant malice of her eyes.

XI. Arques.

I. Noon.

The shadows of the rooks fly up the hill,
Up the green grass, and over the white wall;
The trees drowse in the sunlight; all is still;
Only the black rooks cry and call.

Out of the ruined castle, a slow crowd,
Their sultry wings against the sunlight beat;
They float across the valley like a cloud
Across the blue sky's cloudless heat.

Idly I watch them indolently fly,
And idly, like their wings, across my brain,
Drunken with sunlight, black-winged thoughts float by,
Pass, and return, and pass, and turn again.

II. Afternoon.

Gently a little breeze begins to creep
Into the valley, and the sleeping trees
Are stirred, and breathe a little in their sleep,
And nod, half-wakened, to the breeze.

Cool little quiet shadows wander out
Across the fields, and dapple with dark trails
The snake-grey road coiled stealthily about
The green hill climbing from the vales.

And faintlier, in this cooler peace of things,
My brooding thoughts, a scattered flock grown few,
Withdrawn upon their melancholy wings,
Float farther off against the blue.

III. Night.

The darkness fills the hollows of the moat,
And rises up the valley, and comes down
From the low hills, and wicked white mists float
Like floods about the little town.

The night is all about me, crawling dark
Meshes the doubtful shadows of the way,
And all the woods and all the vales of Arques
Fade as the lamps put out the day.

Then in the darkness, face to face at last
With those winged thoughts that gather to their goal,
I feel their beaks and talons taking fast
Hold on my shivering soul.

XII. In Saint-Jacques.

Tired with the sunlight, her eyes close in prayer,
A little heap before a waxen saint;
Heaven above heaven, the starry hosts are there,
The wind of odorous wings, beating, breathes faint.

Ah, she is old, and the world's ways are rough,
She has grown old with sorrow, year by year;
She is alone: yet is it not enough
To be alone with God, as she is here?

Here, in the shadowy chapel, where I stand,
An alien at the door, and see within
Bent head and benediction of the hand,
And may not, though I long to, enter in.

Sightless, she sees the angels thronging her,
She sees descending on her from above
The Blessed Vision for her comforter:
But I can see no vision, only Love.

I have believed in Love, and Love's untrue:
Bid me believe, and bring me to your saint,
Woman! and let me come and kneel with you. . .
But I should see only the wax and paint.

XIII. The Villa Emilia.

Gates that I never entered, under the shadow of trees,
Gates with the garden discreet behind the wall,
Is it here, O garden discreet, is it here after all,
Here and behind your gates,
That the love of my life awaits
In a golden sleep the dawn of my coming, under the trees ?

Under the quiet of trees the garden sleeps in the sun,
Sleeps, and awaits one day a wakening hand ;
Is it I, O garden discreet, is it I shall stand
One day at the gate, and claim
Your princess in my name ?
For she sleeps and awaits the appointed coming, sleeps in
the sun.

Gates that I never entered, gates of my villa of dreams,
Is there a princess at all that your shadows keep
For her lover, O garden discreet, in a golden sleep ?
Ah, if behind your gates
Only a shadow awaits
The shadowy love that I lay at your portals, villa of dreams !

XIV. The Wanderers.

Wandering, ever wandering,
Their eyelids freshened with the wind of the sea
Blown up the cliffs at sunset, their cheeks cooled
With meditative shadows of hushed leaves
That have been drowsing in the woods all day,
And certain fires of sunrise in their eyes.

They wander, and the white roads under them
Crumble into fine dust behind their feet,
For they return not ; life, a long white road,
Winds ever from the dark into the dark,
And they, as days, return not ; they go on
For ever, with the travelling stars ; the night
Curtains them, being wearied, and the dawn
Awakens them unwearied ; they go on.
They know the winds of all the earth, they know
The dust of many highways, and the stones
Of cities set for landmarks on the road.
Theirs is the world, and all the glory of it,
Theirs, because they forego it, passing on
Into the freedom of the elements ;
Wandering, ever wandering,
Because life holds not anything so good
As to be free of yesterday, and bound
Towards a new-born to-morrow ; and they go
Into a world of unknown faces, where
It may be there are faces waiting them,
Faces of friendly strangers, not the long
Intolerable monotony of friends.

The joy of earth is yours, O wanderers,
The only joy of the old earth, to wake.
As each new dawn is patiently renewed,
With foreheads fresh against a fresh young sky.
To be a little further on the road,
A little nearer somewhere, some few steps
Advanced into the future, and removed
By some few counted milestones from the past ;
God gives you this good gift, the only gift
That God, being repentant, has to give.

Wanderers, you have the sunrise and the stars ;
And we, beneath our comfortable roofs,
Lamplight, and daily fire upon the hearth,
And four walls of a prison, and sure food.
But God has given you freedom, wanderers !

III. Amor Triumphans.

I. Envoi.

All that remains for me,
In this world, after this,
Is, but to take a kiss
For what a kiss should be ;

To stake one's heart to win,
Yet have no heart to lose :
Now I am free to choose,
Now, let the game begin !

If my hand shakes and swerves
A little as I play,
Well, such a yesterday
Was trying for one's nerves.

But I am wary, see !
I know the game at last.
I know the past is past,
And what remains for me :

To play a lighter stake,
Nor lay one's heart above,
And to have done with love
For ever, for your sake.

II. Why?

Why is it, since I know you now
As light as any wanton is,
And, knowing, need not wonder how
You work that wonder of your kiss,
Why is it, since I know you now,

Still, in some corner of my brain,
There clings a lost, last, lingering
Doubt of my doubts of you again,
A foolish, unforgetting thing,
Still, in some corner of my brain ?

Is it because your lips are soft,
And warm your hands, and strange your eyes,
That I believe again the oft
Repeated, oft permitted lies,
Because your lips are warm and soft ?

For what you are I know you now,
For what it means I know your kiss ;
Yet, knowing, need one wonder how,
Beneath your kisses, how it is,
Knowing you, I believe you now ?

III. Disguises.

I do not know you under this disguise :
I am degraded by your lips, your eyes.

O lips that I have kissed, as at God's feet,
I kiss you now, and you are only sweet.

O eyes where I have dwelt, as in a shrine,
Your shadowy incense is no longer mine.

Hands I have felt about my heart, I feel
Only your softness through my senses steal.

O rapture of lost days, all that remains
Is but this fever aching in my veins.

I do not know you under this disguise :
I am degraded by my memories.

IV. Vain Memory.

Thank God, your memory's voice grows fainter, her face pale,
She haunts my sight no more along the misty ways ;
Yet should young wandering joys beckon to me, she lays
Across the face of every joy a mournful veil.
I would but dance a measure lightly, and pass by,
I would but lay my head a moment on some breast ;
But as I reach out piteous hands for hope or rest
She glides between, and keen desire and sweet dreams die.
Her hands are cold as death, and death is in her eyes,
Chilled by the breath that kills the life in me she seems.
Her heart is dead that was a heart of many dreams,
My heart is dead that was a heart of many sighs.

V. The Return.

A little hand is knocking at my heart,
And I have closed the door.

"I pray thee, for the love of God, depart:
Thou shalt come in no more."

"Open, for I am weary of the way.
The night is very black.
I have been wandering many a night and day.
Open. I have come back."

The little hand is knocking patiently;
I listen, dumb with pain.
"Wilt thou not open any more to me?
I have come back again."

"I will not open any more. Depart.
I, that once lived, am dead."
The hand that had been knocking at my heart
Was still. "And I?" she said.

There is no sound, save, in the winter air,
The sound of wind and rain.
All that I loved in all the world stands there,
And will not knock again.

VI. The Barrel-organ.

Enigmatical, tremulous,
Voice of the troubled wires,
What remembering desires
Wail to me, wandering thus
Up through the night with a cry,
Inarticulate, insane,
Out of the night of the street and the rain
Into the rain and the night of the sky ?

Inarticulate voice of my heart,
Rusty, a worn-out thing,
Harsh with a broken string,
Mended, and pulled apart,
All the old tunes played through,
Fretted by hands that have played,
Tremulous voice that cries to me out of the shade,
The voice of my heart is crying in you.

VII. The Relapse.

The agony of love has taken hold of me,
Again, the intolerable agony of love ;
And what shall be, when all is done, the end thereof ?
There shall be no more end unto this agony.
But all the roses Love has plucked shall blossom fire,
And all the lilies Love has watered waste with tears,
And ghosts that once were hopes walk in the night as fears,
And hoped-for peace be born a desolate desire.
I have been strong, and conquered love, and shall this be ?
Shall I return, shall all that was be as it was ?
I shall return, I shall return, alas ! because
The agony of love has taken hold of me.

VIII. The Dance.

For the immortal moment of a passionate dance,
Surely our two souls rushed together and were one,
Once, in the beat of our winged feet in unison,
When, in the brief and flaming ardour of your glance,
The world withered away, vanishing into smoke ;
The world narrowed about us, and we heard the beat
As of the rushing winds encompassing our feet ;
In the blind heart of the winds, eternal silence woke,
And, cast adrift on our unchainable ecstasy,
Once, and once only, heart to heart and soul to soul,
For an immortal moment we endured the whole
Rapture of intolerable immortality.

IX. The Silence.

O voices of Love's silences
Exultant in my heart to-day,
You cry to me from far away,
Yet nearer than my heart to me,
Because the voice of silence is
The whisper of eternity.

A little while a little speech
Is ours to speak of mortal things,
But when the rustling of his wings
Betrays the immortal presence near,
What our hearts answer each to each
Only the silence dares to hear.

X. The Bargain.

I called upon your soul,
Once, and I named your name,
Once, and I bade your soul
Come, at my will's control,
Body and soul at your name,
Come : then you came.

For your soul you asked no price,
For your heart you asked but a loan ;
Yet I paid for your soul the price
Of a living sacrifice,
Yet I lent for your heart no loan,
I gave you my own.

I call upon your name,
Now, and I claim your soul,
Still ; for all time I claim
Body and soul in my name.
Have I not paid the whole
Price for your soul ?

XI. After Romeo and Juliet.

Love, where the summer night is ripe and odorous,
Flushed with the spilt wine of the golden-hearted stars,
Out of the garden's dusk and those funereal bars
I hear the voice of Romeo, Juliet calling us
Unto the marriage-grave of love's too keen delight ;
And in the voice of Juliet I have heard the cry
(O heart, to put on passion's immortality!)
Of your wild heart to mine, under a winter night.
Out of the winter night a little light is born,
Yet still in shadowy ways our love goes wandering,
Our heavy-hearted pilgrim love, a way-worn thing,
Faint, though the sky is brightening to the breaking morn.

XII. Chopin.

O passionate music beating the troubled beat
I have heard in my heart, in the wind, in the passing of feet,
In the passing of dreams, when on heart-throbbing wings they
move ;

O passionate music pallid with ghostly fears,
Chill with the coming of rain, the beginning of tears,
I come to you, fleeing you, finding you, fever of love !

When I am sleepless at night and I play through the night,
Lest I hear a voice, lest I see, appealing and white,
The face that never, in dreams or at dawn, departs,
Then it is, shuddering music my hands have played,
I find you, fleeing you, finding you, music, made
Of all passionate, wounded, capricious, consuming hearts.

XIII. Love's Hatred.

I have flung down a plummet in Hate's well :
I hate you worse than any words can tell.
With every little nerve I hate you so,
My body aches with it. I would have you go
A fiery way beyond the ultimate
Rim of the world, that I might feed my hate
With the long, slow, persistent following
Of that uncapturable, vanishing thing,
Your soul, to be a prey unto my hands.
I would be near you, do your least commands,
Serve you with every poison you desire ;
And of your torment in eternal fire
My soul would endure joyfully the whole :
Because I love you more than my own soul.

XIV. The Destroying Angel.

She wanders through the city like a troubled ghost,
And where she passes her eyes light the lingering fire
Of a consuming, void, inexorable desire ;
She passes, the Destroying Angel of Love's host.
Her heart is as a little loving woman's heart,
Her hands are full of pity, and of love her eyes ;
Yet at her look there withers, at her touch there dies,
The lily of peace, love's flower that life has set apart.
Alluring, pale, she passes ; and to her control
The kingdoms of men's strength are given ; and none can trace
In the Destroying Angel's pale alluring face
A hungering heart, a silent proud appealing soul.

XV. New Year's Eve.

We heard the bells of midnight burying the year;
Then the night poured its silent waters over us;
And then, in the vague darkness, faint and tremulous,
Time paused ; then the night filled with sound ; morning
was here.

Time paused ; our hearts were silent ; only your eyes burned
Out of the night as though lit to consume my heart.
The insane anger of love seized and became a part
Of your incarnate spirit ; and your spirit yearned
In such an agonising ecstasy of desire
Unto my spirit waiting to be lost in you,
Spirit to spirit was fused in flame ; and neither knew,
In that transfiguring ardency of perfect fire,
Body from body, spirit from spirit, life from death.
Only we knew, as flaming silence wrapt the past,
We had escaped the shadowy labyrinth at last ;
Only we knew, as brooding silence, like the breath
Of the overshadowing wings of the creating Dove,
Descended on our hearts, and filled our hearts with peace,
Love, born to be immortal, until all time cease,
Was born of us anew, to be immortal love.

XVI. The Pause.

Trouble has come upon us like a sudden cloud,
A sudden summer cloud with thunder in its wings.
There is an end for us of old familiar things
Now that this desolating voice has spoken aloud.
I look out on the world with blind eyes seeking you
In old familiar places where your feet have been.
I see a white face wavering, and all between
Mist, and I hear the sound of a voice sighing adieu!
Love was immortal yesterday: can love abate
One instant's ardour since to-day was yesterday?
Yesterday I was very sure of love: to-day
I look out on the world wonderingly, and wait.

IV. Mundi Victima.

I.

Henceforth for each of us remains the world.
The gates have closed behind us, we are hurled
From the fixed paradise of our content
Into an outer world of banishment,
And, in this anger of the garden's Lord,
His serene angel with the fiery sword
Has yet more pitilessly cast us forth,
You by the gate that looks upon the North
And I by the gate looking on the South.
And so the lamentations of your mouth
I shall not hear, nor tears for this distress
Water my hours' unwatered barrenness.
For love is ended, love that was to be
Endless; nay, love endures perpetually,
But I shall never kiss your lips again,
Nor hold your hand, nor feel your arms enchain
Body and soul in one extreme embrace,
Nor find again the kingdom of your face.
For I have lost you, you return no more;
And I have lost in you the years before
You gathered all my years within the glance
Of your supreme and triumphing countenance,
And all the years whose desultory flame
Shall yet smoke flickeringly after them.
Passion has burnt itself clean out for you;
I go back empty-hearted, to renew
The unprofitable, the vain following
Of every vain, unprofitable thing;

You, with all seemly wishes satisfied,
Go forth to be the most unhappy bride
The sun shall shine upon in rich men's halls.
Hearken, I hear a voice, a voice that calls ;
What shall remain for him ? sadly it cries :
Desolate years, eternal memories.
And what for her ? it cries, it cries with tears :
Eternal memories, desolate years.

II.

If the astrologers speak truth, who tell
That the stars make for us our heaven and hell,
My passionate and perverse horoscope,
Where the intellectual forces may not cope
With Scorpio, Herschel, Venus, and the Moon,
Marked in my life that love in me should swoon
Into the arms of strange affinities.
It was myself looked at me with your eyes,
Where Venus and the Moon with Herschel strove
In some ambiguous paradox of love.
When first I touched your hand I felt the thrill
Knit heart to heart, and at the touch your will
Became as my will, and my will became
As your will, and an unappeasable flame
Was lighted when your lips and mine first met
In that long kiss my lips shall not forget
When I am aged with eternity.
I knew that my desire had come to me,
And that the world was ended and begun,
And I should never more beneath the sun

Go lightly forth on any wayfaring.
I knew that I should suffer for this thing,
For this completion of the impossible,
This mystical marriage of heaven and hell,
With anguish and with extreme agony,
Knowing that my desire had come to me.

III.

I gaze upon your portrait in my hand.
And slowly, in a dream, I see you stand
Silent before me, with your pressing gaze
Of enigmatic calm, and all your face
Smiling with that ironical repose
Which is the weariness of one who knows.
Dare I divine, then, what your visage dreams,
So troubled and so strangely calm it seems?
Consuming eyes consenting to confess
The extreme ardour of their heaviness,
The lassitude of passionate desires
Denied, pale smoke of unaccomplished fires;
Ah! in those shell-curved, purple eyelids bent
Towards some most dolorous accomplishment,
And in the painful patience of the mouth,
(A sundered fruit that waits, in a great drouth,
One draught of living water from the skies)
And in the carnal mystery of the eyes,
And in the burning pallor of the cheeks;
Voice of the Flesh! this is the voice that speaks,
In agony of spirit, or in grief
Because desire dare not desire relief.

IV.

I have known you, I have loved you, I have lost.
Here in one woman I have found the host
Of women, and the woman of all these
Who by her strangeness had the power to please
The strangeness of my difficult desires ;
And here the only love that never tires
Even with the monotony of love.
It was your strangeness I was amorous of,
Mystery of variety, that, being known, yet does
Leave you still infinitely various,
And leave me thirsting still, still wondering
At your unknowable and disquieting
Certainty of a fixed uncertainty.
And thus I knew that you were made for me,
For I have always hated to be sure,
And there is nothing I could less endure
Than a fond woman whom I understood.
I never understood you : mood by mood
I watched you through your changes manifold,
As the star-gazing shepherd from his fold
Watches the myriad changes of the moon.
Is not love's mystery the supreme boon ?
Ah rare, scarce hoped-for, longed for, such a goal
As this most secret and alluring soul !
Your soul I never knew, I guessed at it,
A dim abode of what indefinite
And of what poisonous possibilities !
Your soul has been a terror to my eyes,

Even as my own soul haunts me, night and day,
With voices that I cannot drive away,
And visions that I scarce can see and live.
And you, from your own soul a fugitive,
Have you not fled, did not your pride disown
The coming of a soul so like your own,
Eyes that you fancied read you, yet but drew
Unknown affinities, yourself from you,
And hands that held your destiny, because
The power that held you in them, yours it was ?
Did you not hate me, did you not in vain
Avoid me and repel me and refrain ?
Was not our love fatal to you and me,
The rapture of a tragic ecstasy
Between disaster and disaster, given
A moment's space, to be a hell in heaven ?
Love, being love indeed, could be no less,
For us, than an immortal bitterness,
A blindness and a madness, and the wave
Of a great sea that breaks and is a grave.
Ah, more to us than many prosperous years,
So brief a rapture and so many tears ;
To have won, amid the tumults round about,
The shade of a great silence from the shout
Of the world's battles and the idle cry
Of those vain faiths for which men live and die !
And have we not tasted the very peace
So passionate an escape must needs release,
Being from the world so strangely set apart,
The inmost peace that is the whirlpool's heart ?

V.

Let me remember when you loved me best.
When the intolerable rage possessed
The spirit of your senses, and the breath
As of the rushing of the winds of death
Rapt you from earth, and in a fiery trance
Exalted your transfigured countenance
And bade your heart be rapturously still ?
Or in the holy silence of that thrill
Which stirs the little heart of grass, and swings
The worlds upon their windy chariotings ?
Or in the haunted trouble of those deep
Enchantments of your visionary sleep,
Ardent with dreams, and the delicious strife
Of phantoms passionate with waking life ?
Or when, as a fond mother o'er her child,
You bent above me, and the mother smiled
Upon the man re-born to be her own,
Flesh of her very flesh, bone of her bone ?
Of all your kisses which supremest one
Out of the immeasurable million ?
Or which denied, as on a certain day
You tremulously turned your lips away,
And I, who wronged you, thinking you unkind,
Found it love's penance for a troubled mind,
Grieved it had done some little wrong to love ?
Out of your silences which most did move
The eternal heart of silence, ancient peace ?
Or did you love me best, and then increase
The best with better, till at last we stood,

As he who was love's laureate in each mood
Of passionate communion bids us stand,
First among lovers when but hand in hand ?

VI.

It is all over, I am left alone.
O visiting ghost, these eyes have never known
So cold, calm, tearless, proud, dispassionate,
Desperate, desolate, importunate,
Whose wrong denied you life, and rent from me
Your love, to be this ghost of memory ?
Not yours, though you have left me ; and not mine,
Though I have bade you leave me : the divine
Right of the world's injustice, and that old
Tyranny of dumb, rooted things, which hold
The hearts of men in a hard bondage. Yet,
Not for the world's sake, let me not forget
That, in the world's eyes, I have done you wrong.
And since to the world's judgment must belong
The saving and damnation of all souls
Whom that usurped sovereignty controls,
Indeed I have done you wrong. I loved you more
Than your own soul. I had not loved before,
And love possessed me, fixed my wandering mind,
And drove me onward, heedless, deaf, and blind,
Wrapt in the fiery whirlwind, passion, drove
Life to annihilation upon love.
I had not loved before : I had been love's lord,
I had delicately feasted at the board
Where Folly's guests luxuriously admire

Each dainty waiting handmaiden desire ;
Where, when the feast is over, choice is free.
I had feasted long, I had chosen riotously,
Kisses, and roses, and warm scented wine,
I had bound my forehead with the tangled vine,
I had bound about my heart the tangled hair
Of laughing light loves ; I had found love fair,
Of delicate aspect, and free from guile,
And I had bartered kisses for a smile,
And my vine-wreath for poppies twined for sleep,
And of a sleepy bowl I had drunk deep,
And, dreaming, never dreamed that hearts could ache,
For over-much desire, or for love's sake.
And then you came. The rose of yesterday
Petal by petal drooped, withering away,
And all my bright flowers drooped, withering dead,
And the vine-wreath had fallen from my head,
And the wine-red poppies dripped to earth, and spilled
The bowl of sleep, and all the air was filled,
As with the fluttering voices of soft doves,
With lamentations of the little loves.
Then a new life was born of the last breath
Of that which never lived ; I knew that death
Which love is, ere it is eternity.
I knew that my desire had come to me,
And then I knew that love, I had thought so fair,
Is terrible of aspect, and heavy care
Follows the feet of love where'er he goes,
And lovers' hearts, because of many woes,
Ache sorer than all hearts most desolate,
And dearest love works most the work of hate.

VII.

The world has taken you, the world has won.
In vain against the world's dominion
We fought the fight of love against the world.
For since about the tree of knowledge curled
The insidious snake, the snake's voice whispering
Has poisoned every fair and fruitful thing.
Did not the world's voice treacherously move
Even your fixed soul ? Did you not hold our love
Guilty of its own ardour, and the immense
Sacrifice to its own omnipotence
A sacrilege and not a sacrifice ?
Even in our love our love could not suffice
(Not the rapt silence whose warm wings abound
With all the holy plenitude of sound,
At love's most shadowy and hushed hour of day)
To keep the voices of the world away.
O subtle voices, luring from the dream
The dreamer, till love's very vision seem
The unruffled air that phantom feet have crossed
In the mute march of that processional host
Whose passing is the passing of the wind ;
Avenging voices, hurrying behind
The souls that have escaped, and yet look back
Reluctantly along the flaming track ;
O mighty voices of the world, I have heard
Between our heart-beats your reiterate word,
And I have felt our heart-beats slackening.

VIII.

Love, to the world, is the forbidden thing ;
And rightly, for the world is to the strong,
And the world's honour and increase must belong
To the few mighty triumphing through hate
And to the many meek who humbly wait
The grudging wage of daily drudgery.
The world is made for hate, for apathy,
For labouring greed that mines the earth for gold,
And sweats to gather dust into its hold :
Is not the world bought for a little dust ?
Kingdoms are shaken from their ancient trust,
And kingdoms stablished upon treacheries ;
Under the temple-roof of the same skies
The stones of altars older than their gods
Are beaten down, and in the old abodes
The smoke of a new incense blinds the stars ;
The rind of the earth is eaten up by wars,
As a rat, gnawing, leaves a mouldering heap ;
And the world drowns in a downy sleep,
The world being sworn confederate with success.
Yet will it pardon the forgetfulness
Of laughing loves that linger but a night
In the soft perfumed chambers of delight.
How should it pardon love ? love whose intent
Is from the world to be in banishment,
Love that admits but fealty to one,
Love that is ever in rebellion.
The world is made for dutiful restraint,

Its martyrs are the lover and the saint,
All whom a fine and solitary rage
Urges on some ecstatic pilgrimage
In search of any Holy Sepulchre.
The lover is a lonely voyager
Over great seas and into lonely lands,
He speaks a tongue which no man understands,
Much given to silence, no good citizen,
His utmost joy to be apart from men,
For his creating mind has given birth,
God-like, to a new heaven and a new earth ;
Where, if he dwell apart or in the crowd,
He talks with angels in a fiery cloud
Upon the mount of vision all his days.
Therefore the world, beholding in his face
Only the radiance of reflected light
Left by that incommunicable sight,
Which to the dim eyes of the world may seem
But the marsh-glimmer of a fevered dream,
Bids love renounce love, or be cast aside.
Has not the world's hate ever crucified,
From age to age, rejoicing in its loss,
Love on the same inevitable cross,
In every incarnation from above
Of the redeeming mystery of love ?

IX.

The world has taken you, the world has won.
Accursed be the world ! Was it well done

To give the world, once more, its victory ?
Was it well done to let you go from me ?
For your own sake I suffered you to go :
Did I do right, for your sake ? Say not no,
Say not that I have left you to your fate,
That I have made my own life desolate,
Casting adrift upon a shoreless tide,
While you, blind, shipwrecked, and without a guide,
Fasting and footsore, desolately went
Across an undiscovered continent.
Should I have held you fast, in spite of all ?
Perchance. Yet it was well, whate'er befall,
To have renounced love, merely for love's sake.
Ah, when in lonely nights I lie awake,
And hear the windy voices of the rain,
At least I shall not hear your voice complain
" If you had loved me, you had let me go ! "
Have we not loved and sorrowed ? and we know
It is well to have loved and sorrowed and not striven,
And to endure hell, having passed through heaven,
To know what heaven is, having passed through hell.
Love's moment is a moment of farewell,
Sorrow and weariness are all our years,
And life is full of sighing, and much tears.

X.

What shall your life be in the years to come ?
The world, that recks not of love's martyrdom,
Shall praise in you a weary passionate face,
Where tears and memories have left their trace,

Into a finer beauty fashioning
Your beauty, ever an unquiet thing.
You shall have riches : jewels shall be brought
From the earth's ends to please a wandering thought,
And the red heart of rubies shall suspire
To kiss your fingers, and the inner fire
That wastes the diamond's imprisoned soul
Shall flame upon your brows, an aureole,
And your white breast shall be devoutly kissed
By the pale fasting lips of amethyst,
And the cold purity of pearls enmesh
Your throat that keeps my kisses in its flesh.
Your beauty shall be clothed in raiment fit
For the high privilege, to cover it ;
You shall be served ere any wish arise
With more than had seemed meet in your own eyes ;
You shall be shielded lest the sun should light
A rose too red on cheeks that blossom white ;
You shall be shielded from the wind that may
Tangle a tress delicately astray ;
You shall be fenced about with many friends ;
You shall be brought to many journeys' ends
By leisured stages ; what was mine of old
Shall now be yours, cities and skies of gold,
And golden waters, and the infinite
Renewal of the myriad-vested night.
Where cool stars tessellated the lagoon,
In Venice, under some old April moon,
Shall not some April, too, for you be lit
By the same moon that then wept over it ?
Shall you not drive beneath the boulevard trees

In that young Paris where I lived at ease ?
And you shall see the women I have known,
Before your voice called me to be your own
Out of that delicate, pale, lilac air.
And all this you shall find, as I did, fair,
And all this you shall find, as now I find,
Withered as leaves a ruinous winter wind
Casts in the face of any summer's guest
Revisiting some valley of old rest.
You will remember me in all these things,
I shall go with you in your wanderings,
I shall be nearer to you, far away,
Than he who holds you by him, night and day ;
Close let him hold you, close · what can he do ?
For am I not the heart that beats in you ?
And if, at night, you hear beside your bed
The night's slow trampling hours with ceaseless tread
Bearing the haggard corpse of morning on,
You shall cry in vain for sleep's oblivion,
Haunted by that unsleeping memory
That wakes and watches with you ceaselessly.
What shall your life be ? Loneliness, regret,
A weary face beside a hearthstone set,
A weary head upon a pillow laid
Heavier than sleep ; pale lips that are afraid
Of some betraying smile, and eyes that keep
Their haunting memory strangled in its sleep.
" O mother ! " is it I who hear you cry ?
" O mother ! mother ! " is it only I ?
" O my lost lover ! " shall she not, even she,
Hear, and one moment pity you and me ?

She must not hear, only the silence must
Share in the jealous keeping of that trust.
And when, perchance, telling some idle thing,
Your husband rests his finger on my ring ;
When your eye rests upon the casket where
My letters keep the scent of days that were,
My verses keep the perfume that was yours,
And the key tells you how my love endures ;
When you shall read of me, shall hear my name,
On idle lips, in idle praise or blame ;
Ah, when the world, perhaps, some day shall cry
My name with a great shouting to the sky ;
You must be silent, though your eyes, your cheek,
Will answer for your heart, you must not speak,
Though you would gladly dare a thousand harms
To cry " The joy of life was in his arms ! "
Though you would give up all to cry one cry :
" I loved him, I shall love him till I die,
I am the man you tell of, he is I ! "

XI.

I write this for the world's eye, yet for one.
When she shall hear of me, and not alone,
Let her know always that my heart is hers,
As it was always. If my fancy errs
Into strange places, wildly following
The flying track of any flitting thing,
If I recapture any cast aside
Garlands, or twine for roses that have died

Fresh roses, or bid flowers-soft arms entwine
My forehead flushed with some bewildering wine,
Then let her know that I am most forlorn.
There is no penance harder to be borne
Than, amid happy faces and the voice
Of revellers who in revelling rejoice,
To hear one's own sad heart keep time in vain
With some sad unforgotten old refrain.
For me, the world's eternal silence dwells
Not in the peace of those ecstatic cells
Where recollection goes the way of prayer
Into the void, the welcoming void air,
But here, in these bright crowds to be alone.
Then let her know that I am most her own !
Yet, if it might but save my soul from her,
O come to me, Folly the Comforter,
Fling those wild arms around me, take my hand,
And lead me back to that once longed-for land,
Where it is always midnight, and the light
Of many tapers has burnt out the night,
And swift life finds no moment set apart
For rest, and the seclusion of the heart,
And the return of any yesterday.
Come to me, Folly, now, take me away ;
I will be faithful to you until death
Puff out this wavering and unsteady breath.
Folly, the bride of such unhappy men
As I am, were you not my mistress, when,
Love having not yet chosen me to be proud,
I followed all the voices of the crowd ?
But I forsook you : I return anew,

And for my bride I claim, I capture you.
Folly, I will be faithful to you now.
I will pluck all your roses for my brow,
And, with the thorns of ruined roses crowned,
I will drink every poison life has found
In the enchantments that your fingers brew.
Finally I commend myself to you,
Multitudinous senses : carry me
Upon your beating wings where I may see
The world and all the glory of the world,
And bid my soul from lust to lust be hurled,
Endlessly, precipitously, on.
Only in you is there oblivion,
Multitudinous senses ; in your fire
I light and I exterminate desire.
Though it cry all night long, shall I not steep
My sorrow in the fever of your sleep ?
Where, if no phantom with faint fingers pale
Beckon to me, wildly, across the veil
Of the dim waving of her sorcerous hair,
I may yet find your very peace, despair !
Benignant principalities and powers
Of evil, powers of the world's abysmal hours,
Take me and make me yours : I am yours : O take
The sacrifice of soul and body, break
The mould of this void spirit, scatter it
Into the vague and shoreless infinite,
Pour it upon the restless arrogant
Winds of tumultuous spaces ; grant, O grant
That the loosed sails of this determinate soul
Hurry it to disaster, and the goal

Of swiftest shipwreck ; that this soul descend
The unending depths until oblivion end
In self-oblivion, and at last be lost
Where never any other wandering ghost,
Voyaging from other worlds remembered not,
May find it and remind of things forgot.

IMAGES OF GOOD AND EVIL.

The Dance of the Seven Sins.

THE BODY.

Call in the dancers.

THE SOUL.

All is vain.

We live, and living is the pain
We die of while we live. The earth
Was made in some celestial mirth,
Not for our pleasure. I, who seem
To have some memory of a dream,
I know not when, I know not where,
Dream not, remember, and despair.

THE BODY.

Dream always, and remember not.
I, if I dreamed, have yet forgot
Even the sleep. This hour I hold,
A sand-glass dropping sands of gold.
Call in the dancers, for they give
Bonds to the moment fugitive,
Wings to the moment slow to pass;
I shake the hours in the hour-glass,
Bid the hours dance with you to-night,
My dancers, spirits of delight!

LUST.

I give to man, who is the dust,
Life, and his breath: he calls me Lust.

I am Love's elder ; Love was born
To be the world's delight and scorn,
That man might veil, his sight being dim,
My own infinity in him.
Yet without me, that swiftly move
In all things, the indwelling love
Were as a song without a voice ;
By me the utmost heavens rejoice
At the achievement, in pure fire,
Of their own uttermost desire.
I am in man that flame of flames
He names by God's most sacred names,
Being creation, and from thence
A sleepless, vast omnipotence,
And an eternal fatherhood.
Without me nothing is seen good,
Nothing seen great, nor is there gained
The hope of aught to be attained,
Nor that fine, fiery speed of thought
By which the ends of the world are brought
Together in a wish. I give
More than life holds to all who live,
Being that desire which grants men strength
To endure with joy the utmost length
Of an intolerable way.
Night follows night, day follows day,
And, if I lead, hope flies with me
Across the white hills of the sea,
Across the wavering green lands.
I hold within my subtle hands
The promise of all worlds ; there come

To conquest and to martyrdom
At my indifferent, swift feet
All lovers, who astonished meet :
The pale saint, famishing for God,
The pallid virgin who has trod
The way not of virginity
Unto some alien ecstasy ;
A shepherd with his shepherdess ;
Kings, who have loved the purple less
Than some grey rags about the hem
Of a beggar-maid that passed by them ;
Tortured and torturer, the smile
Still gasping in their lips the while
Their fingers quiver ; and the proud
Lover whom love's hard bond allowed
Not even the release of speech.
I, to all these, am all in each,
Though most deny me, few receive
The half of all I have to give.
Aspire unto my Calvary ;
Few are there that have come thereby.
These are my saints, my own, my sons,
Chosen among my chosen ones
To be my priests serving the fire
Which on my altars is desire
Of the impossible, the breath
Of a seven times renascent death
Of those delights ineffable,
Which, beyond utmost heaven, are hell.
Come near : these things are mysteries :
Come near, who with the spirit's eyes

Dare to behold, and can refine
Your senses to that crystalline
Ardour of the pure fire of love,
Where, beyond hell enjoyed, above
Heaven's ample, utmost lack forgiven,
Heaven over heaven, there is yet heaven.
It was the lust of God, fulfilled
With joys enjoyed, that bade him build
The wanton palace of the earth;
And of that memorable mirth
Which shook the stars upon that day
Some broken echoes drift our way
In any laughter of the grape.
How can Infinity escape
The horror of infinity,
If not by lust that there shall be
Some new, untried, most finite thing
Enjoyed without remembering
That all things else, being enjoyed,
Have perfectly filled full that void
Which is infinity possessed?
So, for those seven days, God had rest,
In that seven times delightful toil,
Creation, from the serpent's coil
Of his own wisdom binding him.
Have I not been God's seraphim?

SLOTH.

These garlands tire me: I am Sloth.
See, in my hair these roses, both
The bracelets heavy on my wrists,

The languor of these amethysts
Chained to my ears with chains of gold,
The Tyrian webs whose downy fold
Droops on my bosom like dull sleep.
Let me but slumber: for I keep
The keys of that unwavering realm
Whose gates not Time shall overwhelm,
Whose shadowy temples no God may,
Though younger born, behold decay.
Come near, O sons of men, come near,
Come without hope, come without fear,
I am that happiness you dread;
Within the curtains of my bed
A twilight moves with happy sighs,
And dreams shall cover your closed eyes
Softer than darkness; plummy wings
Swifter than thoughts of hapless things,
And fragrant with the breath of peace.
Come, let these subtle hands release
Your foreheads tightened with the cords
Of wrinkled wisdom; O grey lords
Of Time's inherited disgrace,
Come, make this heart your dwelling-place.
My lips are warm, because I drowse
All day within a pleasant house;
Wandering odours come and go,
They are the souls of flowers that grow
Too faint with ecstasy to live;
And sounds more frail and fugitive
Than rose-leaf dropping rainy tears
On rose-leaf, fill with delicate fears

The silence listening round my feet.
To me this moment is more sweet
Than any moment I have tired
My soul with having once desired,
Or any moment yet to be,
Delight being infinity.
I have no will to be more wise,
To be more comely in men's eyes,
To be more loved of one who may
Love more than he who loves to-day,
Or to love more than now I love.
I cross my folded arms above
A heart that in remembering
Remembers no unquiet thing;
A heart fulfilled with the intense
Acceptance of that indolence
Which God the seventh day understood,
Declaring all things very good.
Love me, and I am satisfied
To be the soul's delighted bride,
To all love's ardours virginal.
Love me, or love me not at all,
And I am well content at heart
To sleep in some soft place apart,
Lonely as in a garden-close
Slumbers the solitary rose.
I am the wine within the cup,
Body and soul have I drained up,
Unbounded, unconsumed, and void,
Myself within myself enjoyed,
Being myself that loneliness

Which is the pain of beauty, less
Than beauty's vast, presumptuous mirth
Shaken like a flag above the earth.

AVARICE.

I hoard the moments love lets slip,
The dregs that any feaster's lip
Rejects within the cup of life,
The shadows of the fleeting strife
Of colours, and the echoing
Of every half-unuttered thing;
The faint dust shaken from the feet
Of Joy's forerunners in the street,
The knowledge dropt, some heedless day,
By Wisdom passing on her way,
The vows that lovers in a kiss
Have perjured : I am Avarice.
Always I walk with downcast eyes,
Lest, looking at the empty skies,
Wherein no treasure may be found,
I pass some poor thing on the ground.
My robes are ample, fold on fold,
That I may gather in, and hold,
And let not one escape from me,
All treasures of earth's treasury.
Also I walk with lingering pace,
Since, when my eyes behold the grace
And glory whereof earth is full,
And how the world is beautiful,
Infinitely, and everywhere,
Then my desire is as the air

Embracing all things that exist.
All kisses that all lips have kissed,
My lips are covetous that none
Escape them ; fondly, one by one,
My heart remembers every word
Of love that ever lover heard,
And hearkening I shall hoard away
All words that lovers shall yet say,
Saying to myself : All these are mine.
Gold too I love : two things divine
Among all delicate things I hold,
Gold even as love, love even as gold,
Neither of them the fairer thing.
But always, in my bargaining,
I would fain buy, and never sell.
It irks me, howsoever well
I bargain, to make bargain of
A pale and timid word of love
For any jewel of pure gold ;
The little timid word may hold
(Who knows?) in its infinity
The small dust that may haply be
Dust of imperishable earth.
I think, within the whole world's girth,
There is no beauty I can pass,
For anything that ever was
May yet be mine : but for that thought
All beauty were to me as nought.
I love to follow, stride for stride,
The footsteps of my sister Pride,
For Pride with both hands flings away

Unhandled treasures. On her way
I follow Anger also: she
With one hand scatters heedlessly
The gifts that all her lovers give,
But spoilt and broken. I shall live
To old age, for my both hands cling
To Life for all her hurrying.
Only one thing on earth I dread,
The grave; for in that narrow bed
But little treasure-room afford
The gaps 'twixt board and coffin-board.
I shall go down into that pit
Despoiled, for at the door of it,
Life, standing up against the sun,
Shall take my treasures one by one,
Leaving me only, for my part,
A little love within my heart,
A little wisdom in my brain:
The worms of these shall have their gain;
When these have had their gain of me
When then shall all my treasures be?

GLUTTONY.

My robes were coloured in the lees
Of those first Roman vintages
That crushed the whole world's glory up
Into one imperial cup,
The later heavens with dew empearled.
I drink the glory of the world,
As an ox drains a small pool dry:
So passes the world's glory by.

And as an ox makes haste to eat
The meadow-grass beneath his feet,
I eat the glory that may pass
With the world's life and death of grass.
All flesh is grass : shall I assuage
My hunger with the pasturage
Of all earth's valleys, or my thirst
With every rock-born stream that burst
Each cloud-barred, starry mountain-gate?
Surely the valleys shall not sate
My hunger, nor the rainy hills
The thirst that like the salt sea fills
My longing to its hollow shore.
I thirst immortally for more
Than mortal fruits; if I could take
The world as a ripe fruit, and slake
All thirsts at once, have I not dreamed
Of other, unknown fruits that seemed
More delicate than this gross fruit
Whereof the graveyards know the root?
O fruit of dreams, my teeth have met,
Only in dreams, in your red, wet,
Martyred, and ever bleeding heart!
When shall I find you, and what part
Of your bewildering ecstasy
Possess? and what, possessing me,
Shall wholly from my sight remove
The intolerable fruit of love?
This is the fruit that God, in wrath,
Planted upon a garden-path
Where man and woman walked in peace;

And of this fruit the sad increase
Shall end not till the whole world end;
For with the apple did God send
The hot desire of it, and then
The cold rejection, and again
Search, and entreaty, and despair;
This apple hovers in the air
Before the lips of all that live;
I have desired it, and would give
Desire of every earthly wine
That has, in any hour, been mine,
For this that has and has not been.
Often the apple will be green,
Often it will be yellowing
Unto a late, sad, rotten thing;
And always, as it was before,
It will be bitter at the core,
And bitter in the skin. Yet, taste
This fruit of Eden in the waste
Of a spoilt world that but for it
Would have been wholly exquisite.
O priceless and forbidden joy,
Which is the loved and loathed alloy
In every cup of earth; can those
Enchanted fruits of dream compose
A subtler flavour even in dreams?
Grapes of an ecstasy which seems
The ecstasy that souls may have
In some wild heaven beyond the grave,
Is yours a subtler wine than this
Of earth's poor vineyard, wine that is

So sweet to taste, so good to give
The intoxicating lust to live,
And, its so brief desire being had,
Leaves the delighted flesh so sad ?

ANGER.

My robes are red with blood ; my name
Is Anger. The delicious flame
Which burns within me shall not die
Till the last lover has put by
The last kiss ; for it is the fire
Of love, which with extreme desire
Burns out the heart that love has lit
With the extreme desire of it.
I love so ardently, I know
Not love from hate, not joy from woe.
I, when I love, am wroth awhile
With love's delight, if that can smile,
With love's desire, that can abate,
With this most pure and passionate
Moment of moments, if that last
Less than to measure all the past
And all the future. I am sad
Only for this, that I have had
No other hatred so intense
In justice and magnificence
As that self-hatred which I press
Against my own unworthiness.
Could I so dear a hatred prove,
That rapture would out-rapture love.
I walk on many a steep path,

Yet without weariness ; my wrath,
That strives against all mortal strife,
Is as a well-spring of new life.
I sharpen in the lover's heart
Desire, and when the pointed dart
Has flown, and quivers, turn afresh
The barb in the delighted flesh :
The flesh cries out and thanks me. I
In hearts am also jealousy,
Which is love's anger against love
For love's sake. It is I who move
The hearts of men that they refuse
Sought gifts, and women, that they choose
What they desire not. Love becomes,
Without me, as a rich man's crumbs
Unto a poor man ; Love with me
Is the rich man's satiety
Of his spread feast. I am in these
Mother of madness, the disease
That proud men die of ; and in those
Mother of wisdom. There arose
Many, by me, that have gone far,
And, for a perilous pilgrim star,
Have left their hamlets in the vale,
And have found kingdoms. Mine the tale
Of those who, having overturned
Kingdoms, and unto ruins burned
Strong cities, have sat down thereon,
Forgetting to lay stone on stone
That they might build, and wall about,
Mightier cities. I cry out,

In glory, on the topmost towers
Of the world, exulting that the hours
Of the world are numbered ; and my voice
Is louder than the confluent noise
Of the four winds that hurry forth
From South and East and West and North.
Come hither, all that are the slaves
Of any bondage : of the graves
Wherein the dead bury their dead,
Or of youth's bubbling fountain-head ;
Come hither, bondslaves of content,
You, bondslaves of that indolent
Languor of love too satisfied ;
Drink of the spirit of my pride,
And I will free you of your chains,
Yea, I will light within your veins
An inextinguishable fire
Which shall consume even that desire
Of bondage. Who shall set me free,
Lastly, of my own slavery ?

PRIDE.

I wear the purple : I am Pride.
By me Love sits at God's right side,
Equal with God ; by me Love comes
Unto the many martyrdoms
Of fierce and unforgiven desire.
My spirit in Satan was that fire
Which lit the flaming brand he hurled
Into the darkness of the world,
Where men groped dimly after God ;

By me the beggar in the road,
Loving and being loved again,
Laughs in his rags against the rain,
Crying : Is it a little thing
To be the equal of a king ;
Can I have more than all I want ?
I teach the little reed to vaunt
Its rippling, twilight, secret voice,
The wind's breath and the water's noise,
Against the oak's great voice that forms
The eternal battle-cry of storms.
I teach the oak, being great and old,
To scorn, and as a moth's flight hold,
The wandering kingdoms of the clouds.
I hide from kings' eyes their own shrouds,
Whispering : Though the beggar die,
Kings have their immortality !
I teach the dreamer to despise
Thrones for their brief mortalities.
I am that voice which is the faint,
First, far-off sin within the saint,
When of his humbleness he first
Takes thought ; and I become that thirst
Which makes him drunken with his own
Humbleness, and so casts him down
From the last painful stair that waits
His triumphing feet at heaven's gates.
I am the only tempter heard
By Chastity ; I speak the word
Which in her confident heart she hears,
A whisper in her guarded ears :

For others let temptation be
Temptation, not for Chastity !
By me all lovers make their boast,
Contemning the eternal host
Of glories that have filled the earth
Since the first conqueror had birth,
And that eternity of peace
Which the assembled heavens release
To angels that have conquered it,
Beside the one brief infinite
Moment of earth and heaven's eclipse
When in that silence they join lips,
Closing their eyes. I too have sought,
In other's eyes, some grace unthought,
Only to see, as in a glass,
My own unchanging image pass ;
I have seen no one yet more fair,
Greater or subtler anywhere,
Than I am. When I love, being Pride,
I raise my lover to my side,
And I have never loved in vain.
Who loves me never loves again,
Nor have I, being Pride, forgot
A lover. Praise delights me not,
Nor my own mirror : I am I.
To know me is to satisfy
Knowledge ; to love me is to know
Wisdom. Far off, dreams come and go ;
But I, that seek upon the earth
Nothing that had not mortal birth,
That bow not, on the ways of sin,

To aught I have not found within,
Dream never : we must kneel to dreams.
These are, if that be true which seems
To have been written on their wings,
The messengers of foreign kings.

LYING.

I speak all tongues ; also I speak
The learning all the ages seek,
Some capture, and all leave behind ;
But I have cast out of my mind
Wisdom, and out of my heart love.
I lust not, nor sloth-heavy move,
Not covetous, no wine-bibber,
Nor is my tongue hasty to stir,
Nor mine eyes proud ; but I am wise
As the snake's tongue, the woman's eyes.
All men believe me ; me alone
All men believe ; to each his own
Desire I speak, in his own way.
To him who loves but love, I say :
I love you ; to the vain : In truth,
I find you beautiful, O youth ;
And to the timid : You are strong.
Behold these jewels, how the long
Slow silken raiment folds and drifts :
These gems, this raiment, are the gifts
Of all my lovers and my friends.
When at God's feet the sinner bends,
Saying, I repent, I am his thought,
His speech, although he knows it not.

And when at the beloved's feet
The lover sighs : I love you, sweet,
I never loved, not ever may,
Love any one but you ; I say,
Word before word, each word for both.
When Lust says : I am life ; when Sloth :
I am content ; when Avarice :
I seek where any beauty is ;
When Gluttony ; My mortal thirst
Upon immortal fruit was nursed ;
When Anger : I refine like fire ;
When Pride : No Praise do I desire ;
'Tis I who speak in each, 'tis I
Through whom these lordly voices lie,
Since (lest man know me and condemn)
I speak my will to him through them.
Who is there that shall say for me
That all things are but vanity ?

THE BODY.

I am the bondslave of these slaves.

THE SINS.

O tyrant of the many graves,
It is to you that we are bound !
For you, for you, all we have found
New service, bondage ever new ;
We have brought all our gifts to you,
We have made pleasure of our pains,
And you have laid these many chains

Upon our hands, our feet, our souls.
But for this bondage that controls
Our will with that omnipotence
Which not our spirits, though intense
In their own ardour, can revoke,
We had been free ; and as sweet smoke
Had not our liberal glories gone
Up to the borders of God's throne,
Pure as the savour of his breath,
But for you, Body of our death ?

THE SOUL.

Why do you crucify me afresh ?

THE SINS.

O tyrant, sorer than the flesh,
Whose tyranny outlives the morn
Of resurrection, we have borne
From you a heavier slavery,
From you, by whom we might be free !
You gave us spiritual eyes
That we might sin, and be more wise
In sinning ; thought, that we might find
A subtler craft within the mind ;
Wings, that we might be strong to bear
Our burdens through the accomplice air,
Not tiring of them ; sense of good,
That virtue, being understood,
Might be our yoke-fellow ; the sight
Of beauty, that at last we might,

For you, O Soul, bring both within
Your domination, to be sin!

THE BODY.

Dancers, I tire of you. I tire
Of all desire save one desire :
That I were free of you. My brows
Are weary of this golden house,
My brain is weary of your feet,
That loiter where they once were fleet,
Yet cease not. Cease ! for I behold
No beauty, as I did of old,
In any of your posturing :
You are as some forgotten thing.
And yet I saw you long ago
As those brave joys that come and go
In youth's rebellion of delight
Against old custom ; in my sight
You were the spirits made perfect of
Virtues that sinned from love of love ;
Immortal was each countenance,
Your dance was as the starry dance
Of the seven planets. Now I see
A wheel turn on an axle-tree,
A beggar's cloak that the wind shook ;
Your painted faces are a book
Scrawled by the fingers of a child ;
How is it I was so beguiled,
What was it that I loved you for,
O false ones, whom I now abhor
Even as I did adore you once ?

I would I could put back the sun's
Dark hand upon the dial! Alas,
It is too late, and I must pass
The interval, until all ends,
With you, whom I have chosen for friends,
Chosen for my friends I know not how.
Would that the dance were over now !

THE SOUL.

Dancers, I tire of you, I tire
Of all desire save one desire :
That I were free of you. My eyes
Are heavy with the mockeries
Of your eternal vanity ;
Your motions know not melody,
As your souls know not. You advance
As waves do, and your tangled dance
Scatters as leaves blown down the wind.
I find no grace in you, I find
Vanity, your illusions vain ;
And though I have thus long been fain
To endure you for the Body's sake,
And seeking from myself to make
Some moment's folly of escape,
Yet have I seen each soft-veiled shape
In its ungirded nakedness,
Each painted face a white distress
Under the smile ; astray, the beat
Of hurrying and unanswering feet,
And that you know not why you go
Your wandering ways : but who shall know

Save one that silent in the wings
Stands, and beholds your wanderings,
Who set the measure that you mar ?
Have I not seen you as you are
Always, and have I once admired
Your beauty ? I am very tired,
Dancers, I am more tired than you.
When shall the dance be all danced through ?
I see the lights grow dimmer ; one
By one the lights go out ; the sun
Will meet the darkness on its way.
Is it near morning ?

THE STAGE-MANAGER.
It is day.

THE SOUL.
Would it were that last day of days !

THE STAGE-MANAGER.
It is. Each morning that decays
To midnight ends the world as well,
For the world's day, as that farewell
When, at the ultimate judgment-stroke,
Heaven too shall vanish in pale smoke.

The Lover of the Queen of Sheba. To Sarojini.

A YOUTH OF SHEBA. THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.
THE HERALD. KING SOLOMON.

THE YOUTH.

I live before the Moon of Queens,
I live and die before her sweet,
White, secret, wise, indifferent feet ;
And love, that is my life-blood, means
No more to her than summer heat
Or sudden sweetness of the flowers.
O colder than the icy moon,
That hides and dreams all day, to swoon
At night among the starry hours
When the pale night is at its noon !
She, the one whiteness of the earth,
For whom the ardent valley grows
A flame, an odour, and the rose,
Finds in the world but wisdom worth
The trouble of the soul's repose.
Kings from the West, Kings from the East,
Have poured out gold, incense, and myrrh
In tribute at the feet of her,
To whom the word of sage or priest
Is more than these, and lovelier
Than battles reddening the plain,
Or cities washed with smoking waves,
Or far-off continents of slaves

Bound captive to her anklet chain,
Or conquest of uncounted graves.
Kings from the East, Kings from the West,
Have come and gone, and no man yet
Has found the frozen amulet
That seals her heart within her breast.

THE HERALD.

Room for the Queen of Sheba, let
The hearts and knees of all men bow!

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

O gazer of the stars, draw near,
I have a tidings for thine ear,
Now all things are accomplished, now
The master of the world is here:
Mine eyes have looked on Solomon.

THE YOUTH.

May the Queen prosper in all things!

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

The wisdom of the King of Kings
Is as his God's pavilion,
Pure gold, and veiled by seraph's wings.
Else were it brighter than white light:
As in a tender sea I bathe
In brightness, and its waves enswathe
My inmost spirit with delight.

THE YOUTH.

Be all things even as the Queen saith!

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

I have unburdened all my soul,
And he has filled my soul with his:
There is none wiser than he is,
His soul has opened to the whole
World's wisdom, as to happiness,
And wisdom blossoms like a flower
That need but blossom to be fair;
And as the crown upon his hair
His pure magnificence of power
Garlands his going everywhere.

THE YOUTH.

The Queen is wiser than all men;
Why should the Queen of Queens bow down
To any wisdom, when the crown
Of wisdom is her own, and when
The soul of wisdom is her own?

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

I am a child before this man,
I have but played with toys, and fought
With shadows, and my little thought
Shrivels before him to a span,
And all I am is less than nought.

THE YOUTH.

Madam, the Kings of all the earth

Have been accounted in your eyes
Even as a little dust of spice,
A little fragrant moment's worth;
Yet these, although they were not wise,
Madam, these loved you with a love
That was a shield and buckler flung
About your life, a banner hung
Upon the topmost towers thereof;
And these were mighty, and these young,
And all had died for you, and all
Had lived for you, and all had been,
Being Kings, the servants of the Queen.
Shall Solomon attend your call,
Shall he, a slave with slaves, be seen?

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

O youth that speakest these brave words,
Hast thou loved any?

THE YOUTH.

Madam, yea.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

And did thy will choose out thy way,
And didst thou love for flocks and herds,
And didst thou love who loved thee, say?

THE YOUTH.

Madam, I loved but for love's sake.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.
Happily?

THE YOUTH.
Happily; in vain.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.
Wouldst thou be free of love again?

THE YOUTH.
O Queen, how gladly would I take
Into my heart a tenfold pain!

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.
Thou lovest well. I would love well.

THE HERALD.
Room for the King of Israel, bow
Your hearts and knees before him now;
Room for the King of Israel!

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.
King of the Kings of earth, hail thou!

KING SOLOMON.
O Queen, in Sheba hast thou found
Among the groves of spice and myrrh
The honeyed wisdom lovelier
Upon thy moving lips than sound
Of psaltery or dulcimer?

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

O King, I have given up my youth
To wisdom, I have sought to find
The secret influences that bind
Star unto star, the grains of truth
Shredded in sand beneath the wind,
The secret dropping in the rain,
The secret hushed among the reeds
And huddled in the heart of weeds ;
And I have called across the plain
Wise men whose words are more than deeds,
And I have listened to their speech,
And talked with those Arabians
Whose memory is more than man's,
And read with them the books that teach
The lore of the Egyptians.
And I have given up for this
The joy of love, and all the spring,
And all the garden blossoming
With scents of simple happiness,
And every sweet unthoughtful thing.
I have given up the joys of life
That I might find its secret ; lo,
I have attained not even to know
Why, when thou comest near, the strife
That comes and goes and will not go
Out of my heart is strangely stilled.
O King, my wisdom unto thine
Is as a shadow, and no more mine ;
Thou in whom wisdom is fulfilled,
Canst thou the word of life divine ?

KING SOLOMON.

O Queen, I also have inquired,
And sought out wisdom patiently,
And if in all the world there be
More wisdom yet to be desired,
Wisdom is weariness to me.
For wisdom, being attained, but shows
That all things are but shadows cast
On running water, swiftly past,
And as the shadow of the rose
That withers in the mirror glassed.
What shall it profit me to have been
Yesterday happy, if to-day
I am sad, and where is yesterday?
What shall it profit me, O Queen,
When I am dead, and laid away
Under the earth, to have been wise,
To have lived long and ruled with might,
When all the ancient weight of night
Is as a burden on mine eyes,
And all the word is full of light?
There is one secret unto all :
Though life be fair or life forlorn,
Though men bow down to thee or scorn,
Howe'er fate fill the interval,
'Tis better not to have been born.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

O King, how then may we that live,
Best use the interval that waits
Between the closed and open gates?

How may we best, O King, forgive
For this sad gift the unfriendly fates ?

KING SOLOMON.
Queen, we may love.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.
Yet is not love,
As life, illusion ?

KING SOLOMON.
Even so deep,
That this enchants into its sleep
Even them that know the secret of
The enchanted slumber that they keep.
Love only of illusions brings
The present to the present hour ;
Wisdom and wealth and state and power
Promise the future, whose slow wings,
When we have reached it, do but shower
A little travelling dust on us
While groping in the dust we bow ;
Love only is the eternal now,
Being of our frailty piteous.
When thou art I, and I am thou,
Time is no more ; the heavy world,
As we among the lilies, we
Under the vine and almond tree,
Wake to that slumber, might be hurled
Into the void eternity,
And we not know. Beloved, come

Into the garden dim with spice ;
Let us forget that we are wise,
And wisdom, though it be the sum
Of all but love, is love's disguise.
Let us forget all else that is,
Save this, that joy is ours to know,
A moment, ere he turn and go,
And that joy's moment, love, is this.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.
Beloved, be it even so.

THE YOUTH.

He who has found all wisdom out
Is yet too wise to find out love ;
His wisdom and the pride thereof
Is as a cloud folded about
The brightness of the sun above.
He does not know that love is breath
A man but breathes because he must ;
A breath, a bondage, and a trust,
That knows not time, that knows not death,
That knows not love which is but lust,
Nor love which is but vain desire.
He, who is wisdom, does not see
It is from all eternity
Man loves that love which shall not tire
When heaven and earth have ceased to be.
She, for his moment, loves not him,
But wisdom ; let him love, not her,
But love ; I, waiting lonelier

Than even of old, watch out the dim
And shadowy days, that without stir
Into the dusk of years descend ;
I wait, till heaven and earth being gone,
She comes to me to be my own
Until this love come to an end.
Bow down to me, O Solomon !

The Dance of the Daughters of Herodias.

Is it the petals falling from the rose ?
For in the silence I can hear a sound
Nearer than my own heart-beat, such a word
As roses murmur, blown by a great wind.
I see a pale and windy multitude
Beaten about the air, as if the smoke
Of incense kindled into visible life
Shadowy and invisible presences ;
And, in the cloudy darkness, I can see
The thin white feet of many women dancing,
And in their hands . . . I see it is the dance
Of the daughters of Herodias ; each of them
Carries a beautiful platter in her hand,
Smiling, because she holds against her heart
The secret lips and the unresting brow
Some John the Baptist's head makes lamentable ;
Smiling as innocently as if she carried
A wet red quartered melon on a dish.
For they are stupid, and they do not know
That they are slaying the messenger of God.
Here is Salome. She is a young tree
Swaying in the wind ; her arms are slender branches,
And the heavy summer leafage of her hair
Stirs as if rustling in a silent wind ;
Her narrow feet are rooted in the ground,
But, when the dim wind passes over her,
Rustlingly she awakens, as if life
Thrilled in her body to its finger-tips.
Her little breasts arise as if a thought

Beckoned, her body quivers ; and she leans
Forward, as if she followed, her wide eyes
Swim open, her lips seek ; and now she leans
Backward, and her half-parted lips are moist,
And her eyelashes mingle. The gold coins
Tinkle like little bells about her waist,
Her golden anklets clash once, and are mute.
The eyes of the blue-lidded turquoises,
The astonished rubies, waked from dreams of fire,
The emeralds coloured like the under-sea,
Pale chrysoprase and flaming crysolite,
The topaz twofold, twofold sardonyx,
Open, from sleeping long between her breasts ;
And those two carbuncles, which are the eyes
Of the gold serpent nesting in her hair,
Shoot starry fire ; the bracelets of wrought gold
Mingle with bracelets of carved ivory
Upon her drooping wrists. Herodias smiles,
But the grey face of Herod withers up,
As if it dropped to ashes ; the parched tongue
Labours to moisten his still-thirsting lips ;
The rings upon his wrinkled fingers strike,
Ring against ring, between his knees. And she,
Salome, has forgotten everything,
But that the wind of dancing in her blood
Exults, crying a strange, awakening song ;
And Herod has forgotten everything,
He has forgotten he is old and wise.
He does not hear the doubled-handed sword
Scrape on the pavement, as Herodias beckons
The headsman, from behind him, to come forth.

They dance, the daughters of Herodias,
With their eternal, white, unfaltering feet,
And always, when they dance, for their delight,
Always a man's head falls because of them.
Yet they desire not death, they would not slay
Body or soul, no, not to do them pleasure:
They desire love, and the desire of men;
And they are the eternal enemy.
They know that they are weak and beautiful,
And that their weakness makes them beautiful,
For pity, and because man's heart is weak.
To pity woman is an evil thing;
She will avenge upon you all your tears,
She would not that a man should pity her.
But to be loved by one of these beloved
Is poison sweeter than the cup of sleep
At midnight: death, or sorrow worse than death,
Or that forgetfulness, drowning the soul,
Shall heal you of it, but no other thing:
For they are the eternal enemy.
They do not understand that in the world
There grows between the sunlight and the grass
Anything save themselves desirable.
It seems to them that the swift eyes of men
Are made but to be mirrors, not to see
Far-off, disastrous, unattainable things.
"For are not we," they say, "the end of all?
Why should you look beyond us? If you look
Into the night, you will find nothing there:
We also have gazed often at the stars.
We, we alone among all beautiful things,

We only are real : for the rest are dreams.
Why will you follow after wandering dreams
When we await you? And you can but dream
Of us, and in our image fashion them ! ”
They do not know that they but speak in sleep,
Speaking vain words as sleepers do ; that dreams
Are fairer and more real than they are ;
That all this tossing of our freighted lives
Is but the restless shadow of a dream ;
That the whole world, and we that walk in it,
Sun, moon, and stars, and the unageing sea,
And all the happy humble life of plants,
And the unthoughtful eager life of beasts,
And all our loves, and birth, and death, are all
Shadows, and a rejoicing spectacle
Dreamed out of utter darkness and the void
By that first, last, eternal soul of things,
The shadow of whose brightness fashions us,
That, for the day of our eternity,
It may behold itself as in a mirror.
Shapes on a mirror, perishable shapes,
Fleeting, and without substance, or abode
In a fixed place, or knowledge of ourselves,
Poor, fleeting, fretful, little arrogant shapes ;
Let us dream on, forgetting that we dream !

They dance, the daughters of Herodias,
Everywhere in the world, and I behold
Their rosy-petalled feet upon the air
Falling and falling in a cadence soft
As thoughts of beauty sleeping. Where they pass,

The wisdom which is wiser than things known,
The beauty which is fairer than things seen,
Dreams which are nearer to eternity
Than that most mortal tumult of the blood
Which wars on itself in loving, droop and die.
But they smile innocently, and dance on,
Having no thought but this unslumbering thought:
"Am I not beautiful? Shall I not be loved?"
Be patient, for they will not understand,
Not till the end of time will they put by
The weaving of slow steps about men's hearts.
They shall be beautiful, they shall be loved.
And though a man's head falls because of them
Whenever they have danced his soul asleep,
It is not well that they should suffer wrong;
For beauty is still beauty, though it slay,
And love is love, although it love to death.
Pale, windy, and ecstatic multitude
Beaten about this mortal air with winds
Of an all but immortal passion, borne
Upon the flight of thoughts that drooped their wings
Into the cloud and twilight for your sake,
Yours is the beauty of your own desire,
And it shall wither only with that love
Which gave it being. Dance in the desolate air,
Dance always, daughters of Herodias,
With your eternal, white, unfaltering feet,
But dance, I pray you, so that I from far
May hear your dancing fainter than the drift
Of the last petals falling from the rose.

The Chimaera.

I dreamed that the Chimaera came,
A wandering angel, white with flame
From some cloud's height or moonless deep,
And bent above me in the sleep
We dream in cradles, mused, and smiled
Subtly, and said to me: "O child,
Born under Venus, to be love's,
Under the Moon, that whitely moves,
Chaste and inconstant, over heaven;
Child, who to Herschel has been given,
The star of strange desire, all these
Are busy with your destinies.
You shall desire immortal things,
And, in too swift imaginings,
Tire out desire, who has but wings.
You shall desire love, you shall track
The young God home; then, shrinking back,
Like Psyche from his naked face,
Desert him at the meeting-place.
You shall desire fame, yet despise
The bent knees, the insolent cries
And loud hands of the multitude.
You shall desire joy's daily food
And hope's unalterable home,
Yet refuse peace. And there shall come
Every desire you have implored,
And shall kneel down, saying Lord, Lord,
And wait your pleasure. But you, tired
Of all desires you have desired,

Shall say, I know you not, and thrust
Scornfully back into the dust
These servitors importunate.
Then, from the silence where I wait,
A blind old madness shall return,
And shall lay hold on you, and burn
Your veins with bitter life; for this
Kings have lost kingdoms in a kiss,
And wise men kingdoms of the mind,
And have gone forth, naked and blind,
With dancing and with insane mirth,
Into the waste ways of the earth.
You shall seek out the Cloven Hill,
Where the wide gates are open still,
The tables set, nor have they ceased,
The feasters feasting at the feast.
Then shall that dusk of shadowy air
(Because for you one light is there)
Blossom in white-rose flame for you,
And the old sun and air and dew
And freshness of the world, and change
Of seasons and cold stars, grow strange;
Then, suddenly, you shall be hurled,
Forth from thence, back into the world.
Then shall your veins, remembering
That sweet, intolerable thing
Which shook their pulses with its breath,
Desire the shadow of that death;
And it shall not be given you back.
Then shall you seek the hidden track
A mist has covered from your eyes

Since like a veil about you lies
The bright imprisonment of day.
Child, child, you shall not find the way."

Chimaera, I have been among
The loving people, who yet throng
The twilight about Tannhäuser;
And I have seen the face of her
Whose sorrow, older than that grace
Which in her face is Beauty's face,
Fights in her battled soul for God.
And the earth, knowing I have trod
Ways not its ways, those ways not meet,
Sets all its stones against my feet.
Let me return, Chimaera! Still
I seek for the accursed hill,
The most fair gate of Hell. Some day,
Chimaera, I shall find the way!

Ah, if I might but find it not!
Are there not other ways forgot
Which lead to other lands than this
Of the immeasurable abyss?
I would that I could one day close
My eyes in some divine repose;
That I could shape to my control
A palace for my restless soul.
With dreams of order I would build,
My comely palace should be filled
With dreams of colour and bright sound,
And twilight should enfold it round,

Setting a veil against the sun.
Then, like mute servants, one by one,
Dreams should bring in to me, and lay
Before my feet, and bear away,
Beautiful things of earth, but changed,
Made pallid, delicate, estranged
From the gold light, the glittering air.
There should my soul find refuge, there
Life and my dream of life be one.
Too late! The music has begun
Which calls me in the air; there floats
A sound of voices, the wild notes
(Is it in air, is it from earth?)
Which were the wine-song of our mirth.
They call me if a moment's peace
Rock memory to sleep; then cease.

Chimaera, I will strive no more.
All things, as they have been before,
Shall be, until the end of days,
Nor shall our crying change the ways
Our feet must walk in. I will strive
No more, content to be alive,
Hoping no hopes, accepting all,
Quiet behind the prison-wall
Which with my own self shuts me in.
Why strive in vain? why not begin
To make my prison fair to see,
And half forget my slavery?
Shall not the universal stars
Visit me through my prison-bars?

But it is you, Chimaera, you,
Whose low continual whisper through
Those prison-bars the whole day long
Comes to me, murmuring: "Up, be strong,
Cast off your chains, come forth, behold
A way of roses and of gold;
Winter is over, and the spring
In the world's heart is blossoming;
It is the time of lilies. Come!"
O impotent voice abhorred, be dumb!
Why is it that I cannot find
Bounds to my ardours unconfined,
Why, empty of sin and void of grace,
Do I behold only my face
In the white mirror of the world,
Vainly, and without respite, hurled
Like the torn winds about the void;
Why thirsting still for unenjoyed
Delights and undiscovered springs,
Desiring in all mortal things
To hear and hold and taste and see
Mortal impossibility?
All men, not wholly drowned in life,
Suffer the rapture and the strife
Of their Chimaera: some men chain
That airy monster of the brain,
And he is Ariel to them; some
Endure his bondage. Yet there come,
To all these, phantoms of release,
Even these possess the secret peace
Which is both memory and hope.

But I have rendered all things up :
White angel, wandering from afar,
I know you now, the thing you are,
I know I am myself mine own
Chimaera, chained, famished, alone.
Whose anger heartens him afresh
To feed upon his very flesh,
Till anguish bid delight to pause ;
And I must suffer him because
Until the hour when God shall send
Suddenly the reluctant end
He with my breath must draw his breath.
O bonds slave, bonds slave unto death,
Might I but hope that death should free
This self from its eternity !

The Old Women.

They pass upon their old, tremulous feet,
Creeping with little satchels down the street,
And they remember, many years ago,
Passing that way in silks. They wander, slow
And solitary, through the city ways,
And they alone remember those old days
Men have forgotten. In their shaking heads
A dancer of old carnivals yet treads
The measure of past waltzes, and they see
The candles lit again, the patchouli
Sweeten the air, and the warm cloud of musk
Enchant the passing of the passionate dusk.
Then you will see a light begin to creep
Under the earthen eyelids, dimmed with sleep,
And a new tremor, happy and uncouth,
Jerking about the corners of the mouth.
Then the old head drops down again, and shakes,
Muttering.

Sometimes, when the swift gaslight wakes
The dreams and fever of the sleepless town,
A shaking huddled thing in a black gown
Will steal at midnight, carrying with her
Violet little bags of lavender,
Into the tap-room full of noisy light;
Or, at the crowded earlier hour of night,
Sidle, with matches, up to some who stand
About a stage-door, and, with furtive hand,
Appealing: "I too was a dancer, when
Your fathers would have been young gentlemen!"

And sometimes, out of some lean ancient throat,
A broken voice, with here and there a note
Of unspoilt crystal, suddenly will arise
Into the night, while a cracked fiddle cries
Pantingly after; and you know she sings
The passing of light, famous, passing things.
And sometimes, in the hours past midnight, reels
Out of an alley upon staggering heels,
Or into the dark keeping of the stones
About a doorway, a vague thing of bones
And draggled hair.

And all these have been loved.
And not one ruinous body has not moved
The heart of man's desire, nor has not seemed
Immortal in the eyes of one who dreamed
The dream that men call love. This is the end
Of much fair flesh; it is for this you tend
Your delicate bodies many careful years,
To be this thing of laughter and of tears,
To be this living judgment of the dead,
An old grey woman with a shaking head.

The Unloved.

These are the women whom no man has loved.
Year after year, day after day has moved
These hearts with many longings, and with tears,
And with content; they have received the years
With empty hands, expecting no good thing;
Life has passed by their doors, not entering.
In solitude, and without vain desire,
They have warmed themselves beside a lonely fire;
And, without scorn, beheld as in a glass
The blown and painted leaves of Beauty pass.
Their souls have been made fragrant with the spice
Of costly virtues lit for sacrifice;
They have accepted Life, the unpaid debt,
And looked for no vain day of reckoning.

Yet

They too in certain windless summer hours
Have felt the stir of dreams, and dreamed the powers
And the exemptions and the miracles
And the cruelty of Beauty. Citadels
Of many-walled and deeply-moated hearts
Have suddenly surrendered to the arts
Of so compelling magic; entering,
They have esteemed it but a little thing
To have won so great a conquest; and with haste
They have cast down, and utterly laid waste,
Tower upon tower, and sapped their roots with flame;
And passed on that eternity of shame
Which is the way of Beauty on the earth.

And they have shaken laughter from its mirth,
To be a sound of trumpets and of horns
Crying the battle-cry of those red morns
Against a sky of triumph.

On some nights
Of delicate Springtide, when the hesitant lights
Begin to fade, and glimmer, and grow warm,
And all the softening air is quick with storm,
And the ardours of the young year, entering in,
Flush the grey earth with buds; when trees begin
To feel a trouble mounting from their roots,
And all their green life blossoming into shoots,
They too, in some obscure, unblossoming strife,
Have felt the stirring of the sap of life.
And they have wept, with bowed heads; in the street
They hear the twittering of little feet,
The rocking of the cradles in their hearts.

This is a mood, and, as a mood, departs
With the dried tears; and they resume the tale
Of the dropt stitches; these must never fail
For a dream's sake; nor, for a memory,
The telling of a patient rosary.

The Beggars.

It is the beggars who possess the earth.
Kings on their throne have but the narrow girth
Of some poor known dominion; these possess
All the unknown, and that vast happiness
Of the uncertainty of human things.
Wandering on eternal wanderings,
They know the world; and, tasting but the bread
Of charity, know man; and, strangely led
By some vague, certain, and appointed hand,
Know fate; and, being lonely, understand
Some little of the thing without a name
That sits by the roadside and talks with them,
When they are silent; for the soul is shy
If more than its own shadow loiter by.
They and the birds are old acquaintances,
Knowing the dawn together; theirs it is
To settle on the dusty land like crows,
The ragged vagabonds of the air; who knows
How they too shall be fed, day after day,
And surer than the birds, for are not they
The prodigal sons of God, our piteous
Aliens, outcast and accusing us?
Do they not ask of us their own, and wait,
Humbly, among the dogs about the gate,
While we are feasting? They will wait till night:
Who shall wait longer?
Dim, shadowy, white,
The highway calls; they follow till it ends,
And all the way they walk among their friends,

Sun, wind, and rain, their tearful sister rain,
Their brother wind. Forest and hill and plain
Know them and are forgotten. Grey and old,
Their feet begin to linger, brown arms fold
The heavy peace of earth about their heart,
And soon, and without trouble, they depart
On the last journey.

As the beggar lies,
With naked face, remembering the skies,
I think he only wonders: Shall I find
A good road still, a hayrick to my mind,
A tavern now and then upon the road?
He has been earth's guest; he goes; the old abode
Drops to the old horizon, and the day
Is over, and the dark is on the way.

Divisions on a Ground.

I.

Beloved, there is a sorrow in the world
Too aged to remember its own birth,
A grey, old, weary, and immortal sorrow.
The sorrow of our love is as a breath
Sighed heavily by a sleeper in a dream;
But this great sorrow of the world endures,
Sleepless, the alternation of the stars,
Beholding death, and crying upon death,
Sad with old age, and weary of the sun,
And deathless; and shall not be wearier
When time has rusted your bright hair's fine gold.
Think what a little sorrow have we had
Who have seen beauty with the eyes of love,
Who have seen knowledge, wisdom, evil and good,
With the eyes of beauty, having felt the flame
Cleanse, sacrifice, illuminate us with joy!
Think on all lovers who have never met,
Wandering in the exile of the world,
Remembering they know not what, some voice,
Unheard and yet remembered, or some face
Which shines beyond a cloud and waits for them.
Think then how little sorrow we have had!
All the uncomely evil of the earth
Has passed us by; sorrow has been no clown
Forcing our gates with riotous mirth, but grave
As the unwilling herald of a king.
And we, have we not willed that this should be,
Somewhere, when naked soul by naked soul

The fashioner of the world arraigns his work,
Bidding each living thing behold, and choose,
Beholding, his own lot; have we not willed
That all this should be thus, willing our fate?
O blind, old, weary sorrow of the world,
Receive my pity, though from this day forth
I have said farewell to joy! I have within
A memory which is more than happiness;
I have seen the glory, and am henceforth blind
That I may feast on sight. Alas for those
On whom no unendurable glory shone,
Blind from the birth, who labour and behold
No shining on the sea or in the sky
When the long day is over, but endure
The weight of that old sorrow of the world
Which beauty cannot lift from tired men.

II.

The sorrowful, who have loved, I pity not;
But those, not having loved, who do rejoice
To have escaped the cruelty of love,
I pity, as I pity the unborn.
Love is, indeed, as life is, full of care,
The tyrant of the soul, the death of peace,
Rash father and blind parricide of joy;
And it were better never to have been,
If slothful ease, calm hours, are all of life,
Than to have chosen such a bedfellow.
Yet, if not rest, but rapture, and to attain
The wisdom that is silence in the stars

When the great morning-song is quieted,
Be more of life than these, and worth the pain
Of living, then choose love, although he bring
Mountainous griefs, griefs that have made men mad.
Be sorrowful, all ye that have not loved,
Bow down, be sorrowful exceedingly,
Cover your heads from the embracing air,
And from the eye of the sun, lest ye be shamed;
Earth would be naked of you; ye have known
Only to hide from living; life rejects
The burden of your uncompanioned days.
This is of all things saddest in the world,
Not that men love, not that men die for love,
But that they dare be cowards of their joy,
Even unto death; who, dying without love,
Drop into narrow graves to shiver there
Among the winds of time, till time's last wind
Cleanse off the poor, lonely, and finite dust
From earth made ready for eternity.

III.

Let me hear music, for I am not sad,
But half in love with sadness. To dream so,
And dream, and so forget the dream, and so
Dream I am dreaming! This old little voice,
Which pants and flutters in the clavichord,
Has the bird's wings in it, and women's tears,
The dust has drunken long ago, and sighs
As of a voiceless crying of old love
That died and never spoke; and then the soul

Of one who sought for wisdom; and these cry
Out of the disappointment of the grave.
And something, in the old and little voice,
Calls from so farther off than far away,
I tremble, hearing it, lest it draw me forth,
This flickering self, desiring to be gone,
Into the boundless and abrupt abyss
Whereat begins infinity; and there
This flickering self wander eternally
Among the soulless, uncreated winds
Which storm against the barriers of the world.
But most I hear the pleading and sad voice
Of beauty, sad because it cannot speak
Out of harsh stones and out of evil noise,
And out of thwarted faces, and the gleam
Of things corrupted, and all ruinous things.
This is the voice that cries, and would be heard,
And can but speak in music. Venerable
And ageless beauty of the world, whose breath
Is life in all things, I have seen your form
In cloud, and grass, and wave, and glory of man,
Flawless, but I have heard your very voice
Here only, here only human, and here sad
Only of all your voices upon earth.

IV.

Who shall deliver us from too much love?
There is an evil thing within the world,
Mother of hatred, mother of cruelties,
The sunderer of hearts; and this is love.

I, if mine enemy hunger, give him food,
And, if mine enemy thirst, give him to drink ;
This is a little and an easy thing.
But, if I heap the dish with only love,
In any charity, for love's sake alone,
Fate shall not hold me guiltless of that deed.
For sorrow goes with it, and bitter joy,
And memory, and the desire of love,
And aching of remembering hearts remembered.
There is an evil thing within the heart :
Grief shall not master it nor any fear,
Nor any knowledge, nor desire of right ;
Love in the heart shall shine within the eyes,
Giving itself in gift, withholding nothing ;
And where the man gives shall the woman take,
And where the woman gives the man shall take,
Not counting gifts, giving and taking all,
Ruinously, a plague upon the earth.
O giver of this love, give man to see
The glory of thine intolerable gift,
Or snatch again out of his passionate hands,
Out of his passionate and childish hands,
That beautiful and sharp and fragile thing,
Love, that he makes so deadly and his toy !

V.

There is a woman whom I love and hate :
There is no other woman in the world :
Not in her life shall I have any peace.

There is a woman whom I love and hate :
I have not praised her : she is beautiful :
Others have praised her : she has seen my heart :
She looked, and laughed, and looked, and went away.

There is a woman whom I hate and love :
This is my sorrow : she has bound my neck
Within the noose of her long hairs, and bound
My soul within the halter of her dreams,
And fastened down my heart into one place,
Like a rat nailed upon a granary door ;
And she has gone a farther way than death.

There is a woman whom I love and hate :
Not in her life shall I have any peace :
Death, hear me not, when I desire her death !

Souls in the Balance.

I. To our Lady of the Seven Sorrows.

Lady of the seven sorrows which are love,
What sacrificial way
First led your feet to those remoter heights
Which, for the uttermost delights
Of martyrs and Love's saints, are set above
The stations of the passion of our day ?
Seven sorrows unto you has been desire
Since first your cheek grew pale,
And your astonished breath would fail,
And your eyes deepened into smouldering fire ;
Seven sorrows from a child.
Nor has the soul which in you pants and rises
At any time been reconciled
With love and love's intolerable disguises.
In the child's morning-hour
You woke, and knew not the immortal power
Which in your ignorant veins was as the breeze
Troubling the waters of a little lake
And crying in the nests among the trees.
Fear bid you, trembling, wake,
And listen to the voice which seemed to shake
Bewildering prophecies
Unto the empty audience of the air.
The child, grown older, heard that voice again,
Nor heard that voice in vain.
You smiled, with a new meaning in your eyes,
As of some new, delightful care

Which made you suddenly more wise,
Older, and to yourself more fair.
Then silence came about your lips, and laid
That tremulous shadow there,
Whereby the sorrows mark you for their own.
You woke and were afraid to be alone,
And full of some strange joy to be afraid.

First love, the hour it came,
You seemed to have remembered; and you knew
What a smoke-thwarted flame
Love's torch is, and the jewel of love's faith
How flawed, and by how many a name
The immortal comes to mortals, and how death
Is the first breath that love, made mortal, drew.
Therefore, not without tears,
And penitence, and a reluctant rapture,
All love's and not your lover's capture,
Not without sure, foreseeing fears
Of the unavoidable dedication of your years,
You entered on the way,
The way that was to be.

Mortal, and pitiful, yet immortally
Predestinate to that illustrious grief
Whose extreme anguish is its own relief,
Lady of the seven sorrows, who shall say
The ardours of that way?
Men have looked up and seen you pass, and bowed
Into the dust to kiss your weary feet;
And you have passed, and they have cursed aloud

With dusty mouths to find the dust not sweet.
You have passed by; your eyes
Unalterably open in a dream,
Seeing alone the gleam
Of a far, mortal, azure paradise
Which your ecstatic fear is to attain.
Sometimes you linger, when men cry to you,
Linger as in a dream,
Linger in vain,
Having but shared, as they would have you do,
Some ecstasy of pain.

Therefore you shall be neither blessed nor cursed,
But pardoned, for you know not what you do;
And of all punishments the worst
Of punishments for you is to be you.
Go, neither blessed nor cursed:
We, all we too who suffer of you, throng
To make a royal passage for your feet,
When, in a dream, ere long,
They shall go sorrowfully up the street.
You will pass by and not remember us,
We shall be strange as any last year's mirth;
It is not thus, so lightly, O not thus
You carry the seven sorrows of the earth.

II. Stella Maligna.

My little slave!

Wouldst thou escape me? Only in the grave.

I will be poison to thee, honey-sweet,
And, my poison having tasted,
Thou shalt be delicately wasted,
Yet shalt thou live by that delicious death
Thou has drunken from my breath,
Thou didst with my kisses eat.
I will be thy desire, and thou shalt flee me,
Thy enemy, and thou shalt seek:
My strength is to be weak,
And if through tears, not through thy tears, thou see me,
Beware, for of my kisses if thou tire,
Not of my tears,
Not of my tears shalt thou put off desire
Before the end of years.

What wouldst thou of me, little slave? my heart?
Nay, be content, here are my arms around thee,
Be thou content that I have found thee,
And that I shall not suffer thee depart.
Ask nothing more of me.
Have I not given thee more than thou canst measure?
Take thou thy fill of pleasure.
Exult that thou art mine: think what it is
To be without my kiss;
Not to have known me is to know not love.
Think, to have known me not!

Heart may indeed from heart remove,
Body by body may not be forgot.
Thou hast been mine: ask nothing more of me:
My heart is not for thee.

Child, leave me then my heart;
I hold it in a folded peace apart,
I hold it for my own.
There, in the quietness of dreams, it broods
Above untroubled moods,
No man hath been so near me as to have known.
The rest is thine: ah, take
The gift I have to give, my body, lent
For thy unsatisfied content,
For thy insatiable desire's compelling,
And let me for my pleasure make
For my own heart a lonely dwelling.
Thou wilt not? Thou wilt summon sorrow
From morrow unto endless morrow?
Thou wilt endure unto the uttermost?
Ah! little slave, my slave,
Thou shalt endure until desire be lost
In the achievement of the grave.
Thou shalt endure, and I, in dreams, behold,
Within my paradise of gold,
Thy heart's blood flowering for my peace;
And thy passion shall release
The secret light that in the lily glows,
The miracle of the secret rose.

III. The Pale Woman.

I spoke to the pale and heavy-lidded woman, and said :
O pale and heavy-lidded woman, why is your cheek
Pale as the dead, and what are your eyes afraid lest they
speak?

And the woman answered me : I am pale as the dead,
For the dead have loved me, and I dream of the dead.

But I see in the eyes of the living, as a living fire,
The thing that my soul in triumph tells me I have forgot ;
And therefore my eyelids are heavy, and I raise them not,
For always I see in the eyes of men the old desire,
And I fear lest they see that I desire their desire.

IV. Mater Liliarum.

In the remembering hours of night,
When the fierce-hearted winds complain,
The trouble comes into my sight,
And the voices come again,
And the voices come again.

I see the tall white lilies bloom,
(Mother of lilies, pity me!)
The voice of lilies in the room
(Mother of lilies, pity me!)
Crying, crying silently.

The voice of lilies is your voice,
White lily of the world's desire;
And yours, and yours the lily's choice,
To consume whitely, as by fire,
Flawless, flaming, fire in fire.

O lily of the world's despair,
And born to be the world's delight,
Is it enough to have been fair,
To have been pure, to have been white,
As a lily in God's sight?

When the dark hours begin to wake,
And the unslackening winds go by,
There comes a trouble, for your sake :

O is it you, O is it I,
Crying the eternal cry ?

I see the phantom lilies wave,
I hear their voices calling me ;
O you, that are too pure to save,
Immaculate eternally,
Mother of lilies, pity me !

V. The Dogs.

My desires are upon me like dogs, I beat them back,
Yet they yelp upon my track ;
And I know that my soul one day shall lie at their feet,
And my soul be these dogs' meat.

My soul walks robed in white where the saints sing psalms,
Among the lilies and palms,
Beholding the face of God through the radiant bars
Of the heavenly gate of stars ;
The robes of my soul are whiter than snow, she sings
Praise of immortal things ;
Yet still she listens, still, in the night, she hears
The dogs' yelp in her ears.

O Most High ! I will pray, look down through the seven
Passionate veils of heaven,
Out of eternal peace, where the world's desire
Enfolds thee in veils of fire ;
Holy of Holies, the immaculate Lamb,
Behold me, the thing I am !
I, the redeemed of thy blood, the bought with a price,
The reward of thy sacrifice,
I, who walk with thy saints in a robe of white,
And who worship thee day and night,
Behold me, the thing I am, and do thou beat back
These feet that burn on my track !

I have prayed, God has heard ; I have prayed to him, he has
heard ;

But he has not spoken a word ;

My soul walks robed in white among lilies and palms,

And she hears the triumphing psalms ;

But louder than all, by day and by night, she hears

The dogs' yelp in her ears ;

And I know that my soul one day shall lie at their feet,

And my soul be these dogs' meat.

VI. Sponsa Dei.

Jesus Christ, I have longed with my whole heart for thee,
O come to me and be the bridegroom of thy bride ;
In thy eternal presence give me to abide
Till mortal years have put on immortality.
O I have longed with an intolerable desire
For the indwelling ecstasy of the great breath,
For that immortal death which shall annihilate death
And burn up hell with thy consuming kiss of fire.
All night because of thee, Christ, I have lain awake,
Night after night I have lain awake in my white bed ;
The pillow is as seething fire beneath my head,
The sheets as swathing fire, all night, Christ, for thy sake.
Night after night I have waited for thee, all night long,
Mystical bridegroom of this flesh that pants to close
The aching arms of love's desire in love's repose
About thy conscious presence felt : O Lord, how long ?
I have grown faint with over-much desire, and pale
With vigils over-much, my flesh forsakes my bones :
Suffering love of Christ, if that in thee atones
For suffering sin in us, let not thy mercies fail ;
For I have suffered, Lord, upon thy very cross,
I bear upon my brow, my hands, my feet, my side,
The burning wounds thou didst endure when crucified,
And for this gain I do account all things but loss.
Jesus Christ, I have waited for thy coming : come !
Possess this waiting body no man hath possessed ;
Let me but feel thy kiss of fire upon my breast
Lick up the dust of this consuming martyrdom !

VII. Rosa Flammea.

Beautiful demon, O veil those eyes of fire,
Cover your breasts that are whiter than milk, and ruddy
With dewy buds of the magical rose, your body,
Veil your lips from the shining of my desire !
As a rose growing up from hell you waver before me,
Shaking an odorous breath that is fire within ;
The Lord Christ may not pardon me this sweet sin,
But the scent of the rose that is rooted in hell steals o'er me.
O Lord Christ, I am lost, I am lost, I am lost !
Her eyes are as stars in a pool and their spell is on me ;
She lifts her unsearchable lids, chill fire is upon me,
It shudders through every vein, and my brain is tossed
As the leaves of a tree when the wind coils under and over ;
She smiles, and I hear the heart beat in my side ;
She lifts her hands, and I swirl in a clutching tide ;
But shall my soul not burn in flame if I love her ?
She shall veil those eyes, those lips, ah ! that breast.
Demon seeking my soul, I do adjure thee,
In the name of him for whose tempted sake I endure thee,
Trouble my sight no more : lost soul, be at rest !
She smiles, and the air grows into a mist of spices,
Frankincense, cinnamon, labdanum, and myrrh
Rise in sweet smoke about the feet of her
Before whom the sweets of the world are as sacrifices.
Cinnamon, frankincense, labdanum, and myrrh
Smoke in the air, the fume of them closes round me ;
Help, ere the waves of the flood of odours have drowned me,
Help, ere it be too late ! There has no help come,
And I feel that the rose of the pit begins to blossom

Into the likeness of a lost soul on fire,
And the soul that was mine is emptied of all but desire
Of the rose of her lips and the roses of her bosom.
Ah! she smiles the great smile, the immortal shame :
Her mouth to my mouth, though hell be the price here-
after ! . . .
I hear in the whirling winds her windy laughter,
And my soul for this shall whirl in the winds of flame.

VIII. Laus Virginitatis.

The mirror of men's eyes delights me less,
O mirror, than the friend I find in thee ;
Thou lovest, as I love, my loveliness,
Thou givest my beauty back to me.

I to myself suffice; why should I tire
The heart with roaming that would rest at home ?
Myself the limit to my own desire,
I have no desire to roam.

I hear the maidens crying in the hills :
" Come up among the bleak and perilous ways,
Come up and follow after Love, who fills
The hollows of our nights and days ;

" Love the deliverer, who is desolate,
And saves from desolation ; the divine
Out of great suffering ; Love, compassionate,
Who is thy bread and wine,

" O soul, that faints in following after him." ·
I hear ; but what is Love that I should tread
Hard ways among the perilous passes dim,
Who need no succouring wine and bread ?

Enough it is to dream, enough to abide
Here where the loud world's echoes fall remote,
Untroubled, unawakened, satisfied ;
As water-lilies float

Lonely upon a shadow-sheltered pool,
Dreaming of their own whiteness ; even so,
I dwell within a nest of shadows cool,
And watch the vague hours come and go.

They come and go, but I my own delight
Remain, and I desire no change in aught :
Might I escape indifferent Time's despite,
That ruins all he wrought !

This dainty body formed so curiously,
So delicately and wonderfully made,
My own, that none hath ever shared with me,
My own, and for myself arrayed ;

All this that I have loved and not another,
My one desire's delight, this, shall Time bring
Where Beauty hath the abhorred worm for brother,
The dust for covering ?

At least I bear it virgin to the grave,
Pure, and apart, and rare, and casketed ;
What, living, was my own and no man's slave,
Shall be my own when I am dead.

But thou, my friend, my mirror, dost possess
The shadow of myself that smiles in thee,
And thou dost give, with thy own loveliness,
My beauty back to me.

IX. The Rapture.

I drank your flesh, and when the soul brimmed up
In that sufficing cup,
Then, slowly, steadfastly, I drank your soul ;
Thus I possessed you whole ;
And then I saw you, white, and vague, and warm,
And happy, as that storm
Enveloped you in its delirious peace,
And fearing but release,
Perfectly glad to be so lost and found,
And without wonder drowned
In little shuddering quick waves of bliss ;
Then I, beholding this
More wonderingly than a little lake
That the white moon should make
Her nest among its waters, being free
Of the whole land and sea,
Remembered, in that utmost pause, that heaven
Is to each angel given
As wholly as to Michael or the Lord,
And of the saints' reward
There is no first or last, supreme delight
Being one and infinite.
Then I was quieted, and had no fear
That such a thing, so dear
And so incredible, being thus divine,
Should be, and should be mine,
And should not suddenly vanish away.
Now, as the lonely day

Forgets the night, and calls the world from dreams,
This, too, with daylight, seems
A thing that might be dreaming ; for my soul
Seems to possess you whole,
And every nerve remembers : can it be
This young delight is old as memory ?

X. To a Gitana dancing : Seville.

Because you are fair as souls of the lost are fair,
And your eyelids laugh with desire, and your laughing feet
Are winged with desire, and your hands are wanton, and
sweet
Is the promise of love in your lips, and the rose in your hair
Sweet, unfaded, a promise sweet to be sought,
And the maze you tread is as old as the world is old,
Therefore you hold me, body and soul, in your hold,
And time, as you dance, is not, and the world is as nought.
You dance, and I know the desire of all flesh, and the pain
Of all longing of body for body; you beckon, repel,
Entreat, and entice, and bewilder, and build up the spell,
Link by link, with deliberate steps, of a flower-soft chain.
You laugh, and I know the despair, and you smile, and I
know
The delight of your love, and the flower in your hair is a
star.
It brightens, I follow; it fades, and I see it afar;
You pause: I awake; have I dreamt? was it longer ago
Than a dream that I saw you smile? for you turn, you turn,
As a startled beast in the toils: it is you that entreat,
Desperate, hating the coils that have fastened your feet,
The desire you desired that has come; and your lips now
yearn,
And your hands now ache, and your feet faint for love.
Longing has taken hold even on you,
You, the witch of desire; and you pause, and anew
Your stillness moves, and you pause, and your hands move.

Time, as you dance, is as nought, and the moments seem
Swift as eternity; time is at end, for you close
Eyes and lips and hands in sudden repose;
You smile: was it all no longer ago than a dream?

On an Air of Rameau.

To Arnold Dolmetsch.

A melancholy desire of ancient things
Floats like a faded perfume out of the wires;
Pallid lovers, what unforgotten desires,
Whispered once, are retold in your whisperings?

Roses, roses, and lilies with hearts of gold,
These you plucked for her, these she wore in her breast;
Only Rameau's music remembers the rest,
The death of roses over a heart grown cold.

But these sighs? Can ghosts then sigh from the tomb?
Life then wept for you, sighed for you, chilled your breath?
It is the melancholy of ancient death
The harpsichord dreams of, sighing in the room.

Airs for the Lute.

To Madame Élodie Dolmetsch.

I.

When the sobbing lute complains,
Grieving for an ancient sorrow,
This poor sorrow that remains
Fain would borrow,
To give pleading unto sorrow,
Those uncapturable strains.

All, that hands upon the lute
Helped the voices to declare,
Voices mute
But for this, might I not share,
If, alas, I could but suit
Hand and voice unto the lute!

II.

If time so sweetly
On true according viols make
Her own completely
The lawless laws of turn and shake;

How should I doubt then
Love, being tuned unto your mood,
Should bring about then
True time and measure of your blood?

III.

Why are you so sorrowful in dreams?
I am sad in the night;
The hours till morning are white,
I hear the hours' flight
All night in dreams.

Why do you send me your dreams?
For an old love's sake;
I dream if I sleep or wake,
And shall but one heart ache,
For the sake of dreams?

Pray that we sleep without dreams!
Ah, love, the only way
To put sorrow away,
Night or day, night or day,
From the way of dreams!

IV.

Strange, to remember tears!
Yet I know that I wept;
And those hopes and those fears,
Strange, were as real as tears!

What's this delicate pain,
Twilight-coloured and grey?
Odour-like through my brain
Steals a shadowy pain.

What's this joy in the air?
Musical as the leaves,
When the white winds are there,
Faint joy breathes in the air.

Modern Beauty.

I am the torch, she saith, and what to me
If the moth die of me? I am the flame
Of Beauty, and I burn that all may see
Beauty, and I have neither joy nor shame,
But live with that clear life of perfect fire
Which is to men the death of their desire.

I am Yseult and Helen, I have seen
Troy burn, and the most loving knight lie dead.
The world has been my mirror, time has been
My breath upon the glass; and men have said,
Age after age, in rapture and despair,
Love's poor few words, before my image there.

I live, and am immortal; in my eyes
The sorrow of the world, and on my lips
The joy of life, mingle to make me wise;
Yet now the day is darkened with eclipse:
Who is there lives for beauty? Still am I
The torch, but where's the moth that still dares die?

Laus Mortis.

I bring to thee, for love, white roses, delicate Death!
White lilies of the valley, dropping gentle tears,
The white camellia, the seal of perfect years,
The misty white azalea, flickering as a breath.
White flowers I bring, and all the flowers I bring for thee,
Discreet and comforting Death ! for those pale hands of
thine;

O hands that I have fled, soft hands now laid on mine,
Softer than these white flowers of life, thy hands to me,
Most comfortable Death, mother of many dreams,
And gatherer of many wandering dreams of men,
Dreams that come desolately flying back again,
With soiled and quivering wings, from undiscovered streams.
I have been fearful of thee, mother, all life long,
For I have loved a warm, alluring, treacherous bride,
Life, and she loved thee not; to hold me from thy side,
She closed her arms about my heart, to do thee wrong.
O gay and bitter bride of such divine desires,
Too fiercely passionate Life, that wast so prodigal
Of thy eternal moments, at the end of all
Take my forgiveness: I have passed through all thy fires.
Nothing can hurt me now, and having gained and lost
All things, and having loved, and having done with life,
I come back to thy arms, mother, and now all strife
Ceases; and every homeward-flying dream, wind-tossed,
My soul that looks upon thy face and understands,
My throbbing heart that at thy touch is quieted,
And all that once desired, and all desire now dead,
Are gathered to the peace and twilight of thy hands.

To Night.

I have loved wind and light,
And the bright sea,
But, holy and most secret Night,
Not as I love and have loved thee.

God, like all highest things,
Hides light in shade,
And in the night his visitings
To sleep and dreams are clearliest made.

Love, that knows all things well,
Loves the night best;
Joys whereof daylight dares not tell
Are his, and the diviner rest.

And Life, whom day shows plain
His prison-bars,
Feels the close walls and the hard chain
Fade when the darkness brings the stars.

Montserrat.

Peace waits among the hills;
I have drunk peace,
Here, where the blue air fills
The great cup of the hills,
And fills with peace.

Between the earth and sky,
I have seen the earth
Like a dark cloud go by,
And fade out of the sky;
There was no more earth.

Here, where the Holy Graal
Brought secret light
Once, from beyond the veil,
I, seeing no Holy Graal,
See divine light.

Light fills the hills with God,
Wind with his breath,
And here, in his abode,
Light, wind, and air praise God,
And this poor breath.

At Tarragona.

If I could know but when and why
This piece of thoughtless dust begins
To think, and straightway I am I,
And these bright hopes and these brave sins,
That have been freer than the air,
Circle their freedom with my span ;
If I could know but why this care
Is mine and not the care of man ;
Why, thus unwilling, I rejoice,
And will the good I do not do,
And with the same particular voice
Speak the old folly and the new ;
If I could know, seeing my soul
A white ship with a bending sail,
Rudderless, and without a goal,
Fly seaward, humble to the gale,
Why, knowing not from whence I came,
Nor why I seek I know not what,
I bear this heavy, separate name,
While winds and waters bear it not ;
And why the unlimited earth delights
In life, not knowing breath from breath,
While I, that count my days and nights,
Fear thought in life, and life in death.

At Toledo.

The little stones chuckle among the fields:
"We are so small: God will not think of us;
We are so old already, we have seen
So many generations blunt their ploughs,
Tilling the fields we lie in; and we dream
Of our first sleep among the ancient hills."
The grass laughs, thinking: "I am born and die,
And born and die, and know not birth or death,
Only the going on of the green earth."
The rivers pass and pass, and are the same,
And I, who see the beauty of the world,
Pass, and am not the same, or know it not,
And know the world no more. O is not this
Some horrible conspiracy of things,
That I have known and loved and lingered with
All my days through, and now they turn like hosts
Who have grown tired of a delaying guest?
They cast me out from their eternity:
God is in league with their forgetfulness.

Old Age.

It may be, when this city of the nine gates
Is broken down by ruinous old age,
And no one upon any pilgrimage
Comes knocking, no one for an audience waits,
And no bright foraging troop of bandit moods
Rides out on the brave folly of any quest,
But weariness, the restless shadow of rest,
Hoveringly upon the city broods ;
It may be, then, that those remembering
And sleepless watchers on the crumbling towers
Shall lose the count of the disastrous hours
Which God may have grown tired of reckoning.

Opals.

My soul is like this cloudy, flaming opal ring.
The fields of earth are in it, green and glimmering,
The waves of the blue sky, night's purple flower of noon,
The vanishing cold scintillations of the moon,
And the red heart that is a flame within a flame.
And as the opal dies, and is reborn the same,
And all the fire that is its life-blood seems to dart
Through the veined variable intricacies of its heart,
And ever wandering ever wanders back again,
So must my swift soul constant to itself remain,
Opal, have I not been as variable as you ?
But, cloudy opal flaming green and red and blue,
Are you not ever constant in your varying,
Even as my soul, O captive opal of my ring ?

Rubies.

There are nine rubies in this Indian ring,
And every blood-red ruby is a part
Of the nine-petalled rose that is my heart,
The elaborate rose of my own fashioning.
Not out of any garden have I sought
The rose that is more brief than dawn or dew :
Stones of the flame and ice, I find in you
The image of the heart that I have wrought.
For you are cold and burn as though with fire,
For you are hard, yet veil soft depths below,
And each divided ruby seems to glow
With the brief passion of its own desire.
Rose of my heart, shall this too be the same ?
For, when one light catches the wandering rays,
They rush together in one consuming blaze
Of indivisible and ecstatic flame.

Degrees of Love.

When your eyes opened to my eyes,
Without desire, without surprise,
I knew your soul awoke to see
All, dreams foretold, but could not be,
Yet loving love, not loving me.

When your eyes drooped before my eyes,
As though some secret made them wise,
Some wisdom veiled them secretly,
I knew your heart began to be
In love with love, in love with me.

When your eyes fawned against my eyes,
With beaten hunger, and with cries,
In bitter pride's humility,
Love, wholly mine, had come to be
Hatred of love for loving me.

The Price.

Pity all faithless women who have loved: none knows
How much it hurts a woman to do wrong to love.
The mother who has felt the child within her move,
Shall she forget her child, and those ecstatic throes?

Then pity faithless women who have loved: these have
Murdered within them something born out of their pain.
These mothers of the child whom they have loved and slain
May not so much as lay the child within a grave.

An Ending.

I will go my ways from the city, and then, maybe,
My heart shall forget one woman's voice, and her lips ;
I will arise, and set my face to the sea,
Among stranger-folk and in the wandering ships.
The world is great, and the bounds of it who shall set ?
It may be I shall find, somewhere in the world I shall find,
A land that my feet may abide in ; then I shall forget
The woman I loved, and the years that are left behind.
But, if the ends of the world are not wide enough
To out-weary my heart, and to find for my heart some fold,
I will go back to the city, and her I love,
And look on her face, and remember the days of old.

In Ireland.

I. On Inishmaan : Isles of Aran.

In the twilight of the year,
Here, about these twilight ways,
When the grey moth night drew near,
Fluttering on a faint flying,
I would linger out the day's
Delicate and moth-grey dying.

Grey, and faint with sleep, the sea
Should enfold me, and release,
Some old peace to dwell with me.
I would quiet the long crying
Of my heart with mournful peace,
The grey sea's, in its low sighing.

II. By the Pool at the Third Rosses.

I heard the sighing of the reeds
In the grey pool in the green land,
The sea-wind in the long reeds sighing
Between the green hill and the sand.

I heard the sighing of the reeds
Day after day, night after night ;
I heard the whirring wild ducks flying,
I saw the sea-gulls' wheeling flight.

I heard the sighing of the reeds
Night after night, day after day,
And I forgot old age, and dying,
And youth that loves, and love's decay.

I heard the sighing of the reeds
At noontide and at evening,
And some old dream I had forgotten
I seemed to be remembering.

I hear the sighing of the reeds :
Is it in vain, is it in vain
That some old peace I had forgotten
Is crying to come back again ?

III. By Lough-na-Gar : Rain.

Into a land of wandering rain
I have fled from a voice that follows me still
To the lonely cabin under the hill ;
It cries to me out of the windless rain,
And at night I hear it crying again.

All day the rain is on the lake,
All night the rain drips from the thatch ;
I stand at the cabin door and watch
The drifting rain beat on the lake,
And the foam-white ripples gather and break.

The woods are veiled with the rains all day,
The woods crouch under the rains all night,
And the rainy torrents cry from the height ;
I hear in the rain, night and day,
A voice crying from far away.

IV. By Lough-na-Gar : Green Light.

The light of the world is of gold,
But the light of the green earth fills
The nestling heart of the hills ;
And the world's hours are old,
And the world's thoughts are a dream,
Here, in the ancient place
Of peace, where old sorrows seem
As the half-forgotten face
Of flower-bright cities of gold
That blossom beyond the height
Seems in the earth-green light
That is old-as the earth is old.

V. In the Wood of Finvara.

I have grown tired of sorrow and human tears ;
Life is a dream in the night, a fear among fears,
A naked runner lost in a storm of spears.

I have grown tired of rapture and love's desire ;
Love is a flaming heart, and its flames aspire
Till they cloud the soul in the smoke of a windy fire.

I would wash the dust of the world in a soft green flood :
Here, between sea and sea, in the fairy wood,
I have found a delicate, wave-green solitude.

Here, in the fairy wood, between sea and sea,
I have heard the song of a fairy bird in a tree,
And the peace that is not in the world has flown to me.

Spain.
To Josefa.

Josefa, when you sing,
With clapping hands, the sorrows of your Spain,
And all the bright-shawled ring
Laugh and clap hands again,
I think how all the sorrows were in vain.

The footlights flicker and spire
In tongues of flame before your tiny feet,
My warm-eyed gipsy, higher,
And in your eyes they meet
More than their light, more than their golden heat.

You sing of Spain, and all
Clap hands for Spain and you, and for the song ;
One dances, and the hall
Rings like a beaten gong
With louder-handed clamours of the throng.

Spain, that with dancing mirth
Tripped lightly to the precipice, and fell
Until she felt the earth,
Suddenly, and knew well
That to have fallen through dreams is to touch hell ;

Spain, brilliantly arrayed,
Decked for disaster, on disaster hurled,
Here, as in masquerade,

Mimes, to amuse the world,
Her ruin, a dancer rouged and draped and curled.

Mother of chivalry,
Mother of many sorrows borne for God,
Spain of the saints, is she
A slave beneath the rod,
A merry slave, and in her own abode ?

She, who once found, has lost
A world beyond the waters, and she stands
Paying the priceless cost,
Lightly, with lives for lands,
Flowers in her hair, castanets in her hands.

Venetian Night.

Her eyes in the darkness shone, in the twilight shed
By the gondola bent like the darkness over her head.
Softly the gondola rocked, lights came and went ;
A white glove shone as her black fan lifted and leant
Where the silk of her dress, the blue of a bittern's wing,
Rustled against my knee, and, murmuring
The sweet slow hesitant English of a child,
Her voice was articulate laughter, her soul smiled.
Softly the gondola rocked, lights came and went ;
From the sleeping houses a shadow of slumber leant
Over our heads like a wing, and the dim lagoon,
Rustling with silence, slumbered under the moon.
Softly the gondola rocked, and a pale light came
Over the waters, mild as a silver flame ;
She lay back, thrilling with smiles, in the twilight shed
By the gondola bent like the darkness over her head ;
I saw her eyes shine subtly, then close awhile :
I remember her silence, and, in the night, her smile.

Dreams in Rome.

What is it that sings a sleepy tune in my head ?
Some faint old unforgotten moon that is dead ?
I will arise, for the dreams are about my bed.

O is it in vain, is it in vain I have come ?
Dark was the road in coming, and white the foam.
Is there no rest for me here ? are there dreams in Rome ?

Palm Sunday : Naples.

Because it is the day of Palms,
Carry a palm for me,
Carry a palm in Santa Chiara,
And I will watch the sea ;
There are no palms in Santa Chiara
To-day or any day for me.

I sit and watch the little sail
Lean side-ways on the sea,
The sea is blue from here to Sorrento
And the sea-wind comes to me,
And I see the white clouds lift from Sorrento
And the dark sail lean upon the sea.

I have grown tired of all these things,
And what is left for me ?
I have no place in Santa Chiara,
There is no peace upon the sea ;
But carry a palm in Santa Chiara,
Carry a palm for me.

The Coming of Spring : Madrid.

Spring is come back, and the little voices are calling,
The birds are calling, the little green buds on the trees,
A song in the street, and an old and sleepy tune;
All the sounds of the spring are falling, falling,
Gentle as rain, on my heart, and I hear all these
As a sick man hears men talk from the heart of a swoon.

The clamours of spring are the same old delicate noises,
The earth renews its magical youth at a breath,
And the whole world whispers a well-known, secret thing;
And I hear, but the meaning has faded out of the voices;
Something has died in my heart: is it death or sleep?
I know not, but I have forgotten the meaning of spring.

September Idyl : In the Hammock : Chaméane.

A sky of green and gold, tremulous, delicate,
Starred with pale blue, and bright with little voices ; wind
Lifting the golden outer fringe, autumn has thinned ;
A yellow leaf drops rustling, and another : wait,
The leaves begin to whisper, and the voices cease :
I hear the silence ; but a voice flutters again,
A little, fluting voice, soft, piercing, as the rain ;
I close my eyes, and all my body sways with peace.
Delicate, tremulous, seen under eyelids closed,
The sky of green and gold sways over me, and seems
To fill the languid soul with the desire of dreams ;
But the sky fades, and only inner eyelids, rosed
With filtered sunlight falling, shadow as they pass
Not even dreams ; until a trailing hand perceives,
Sudden, the earth again, in the crisp touch of leaves,
And the arresting slender fingers of the grass.

Haschisch.

Behind the door, beyond the light,
Who is it waits there in the night?
When he has entered he will stand,
Imposing with his silent hand
Some silent thing upon the night.

Behold the image of my fear:
O rise not, move not, come not near!
That moment, when you turned your face,
A demon seemed to leap through space;
His gesture strangled me with fear.

And yet I am the lord of all,
And this brave world magnificent,
Veiled in so variable a mist
It may be rose or amethyst,
Demands me for the lord of all!

Who said the world is but a mood
In the eternal thought of God?
I know it, real though it seem,
The phantom of a haschisch dream
In that insomnia which is God.

To the Merchants of Bought Dreams.

I buy no more from merchants of bought dreams,
For I have greater memories than these bring
Back from their cloudy-footed wandering
In the unpopulous air; this magic seems
Indeed a key unlocking crystal doors
That whiten on the unopening mountain-side,
But I can set the gates of treasure wide,
Beyond the last land where the last sea roars.
I have a kingdom under my command
More than the kingdom of these fantasies;
The shadow of the world darkens my eyes,
And I see clear in the shadow; on my hand
I wear the little ring which, waked to fire,
Calls up the lower powers made serviceable;
And earth and time and space and heaven and hell
Blossom to be the flower of my desire.
I have come out of the bewildering mists,
For I have learned a more excelling art;
The world is a pulsation of my heart,
In me the beauty of the world exists.
O what is this that like a torrent streams
In widening waves of living light that pierce
The dark of the transfigured universe?
I buy no more from merchants of bought dreams!

Parsifal.

Rose of the garden's roses, what pale wind
Has scattered those flushed petals in an hour,
And the close leaves of all the alleys thinned,
What re-awakening wind,
O sad enchantress banished to a flower?

Parsifal has out-blushed the roses: dead
Is all the garden of the world's delight,
And every rose of joy has drooped its head,
And for sweet shame is dead;
Sweet joy being shameful in the pure fool's sight.

The Last Memory.

When I am old, and think of the old days,
And warm my hands before a little blaze,
Having forgotten love, hope, fear, desire,
I shall see, smiling out of the pale fire,
One face, mysterious and exquisite ;
And I shall gaze, and ponder over it,
Wondering, was it Leonardo wrought
That stealthy ardency, where passionate thought
Burns inward, a revealing flame, and glows
To the last ecstasy, which is repose ?
Was it Bronzino, those Borghese eyes ?
And, musing thus among my memories,
O unforgotten ! you will come to seem,
As pictures do, remembered, some old dream.
And I shall think of you as something strange,
And beautiful, and full of helpless change,
Which I beheld and carried in my heart ;
But you, I loved, will have become a part
Of the eternal mystery, and love
Like a dim pain ; and I shall bend above
My little fire, and shiver, being cold,
When you are no more young, and I am old.

Toys.

I have laid you away as we lay
The toys of a little dead child,
You know you are safe in my heart ;
You know I have set you apart
In my heart, and hid you away,
Because joy that prattled and smiled
In the heart becomes grief to the heart,
Laying its youth away
With the toys of a little dead child.

Perfect Grief.

The wandering, wise, outcast sons
Of Pharaoh, the dark roofless ones,
Taught me this wisdom : If Death come,
And take thy dear one, be thou dumb,
Nor gratify with suppliant breath
The attentive insolence of Death.
Suffer thy dear one to depart
In silence ; silent in thy heart,
From this forth, be thy dear one's name.
So I, that would not put to shame
So dear a memory dead, repeat
No more the sweet name once too sweet,
Nor, from that buried name, remove
The haughty silence of my love.

The Dream.

O, if the world I make
With these eyes be a dream,
And Love, that is life, but seem
To choose a shade from a shade,
Then let me wake !
I have loved, not Love, but a pale,
Mortal woman, and made
The whole world for her sake ;
Let the sight of my eyes fail,
And the whole world fade :
I have dreamed : let me wake !

Weariness.

I.

There are grey hours when I drink of indifference ; all things
fade
Into the grey of a twilight that covers my soul with its sky ;
Scarcely I know that this shade is the world, or this burden is I ;
And life, and art, and love, and death, are the shades of a shade.

Then, in those hours, I hear old voices murmur aloud,
And memory tires of the hopelessly hoping desire, her regret
I hear the remembering voices, and I forget to forget ;
The world as a cloud drifts by, or I drift by as a cloud.

II.

I am weary at heart, yet not weary with sorrow, nor weary
with pain

I would that an eager sorrow returned to me out of the deep

I could fold my hands in the morning, lie down on my bed
again

O Sorrow, angel of Joy, re-awaken my heart from its sleep !

I am wearier than the old, when they sit and smile in the sun

Dreaming of sorrowful things, grown happy and dim to their
sight

But I dream in the morning, my daylight is over, my day's
work done

I am old at heart, for my sorrow is sleepy, and nods before
night

Wind on the Sea.

The loneliness of the sea is in my heart,
And the wind is not more lonely than this grey mind.
I have thought far thoughts, I have loved, I have loved, and
I find
Love gone, thought weary, and I, alas, left behind.

The loneliness of my heart is in the sea,
And my mind is not more lonely than this grey wind.
Who shall stay the feet of the sea, or bind
The wings of the wind? only the feet of mankind
Grow old in the place of their sorrow, and bitter is the heart
That may not wander as the wind or return as the sea.

A Tune.

A foolish rhythm turns in my idle head
As a wind-mill turns in the wind on an empty sky.
Why is it when love, which men call deathless, is dead,
That memory, men call fugitive, will not die?
Is love not dead? yet I hear that tune if I lie
Dreaming awake in the night on my lonely bed,
And an old thought turns with the old tune in my head
As a wind-mill turns in the wind on an empty sky.

The One Face.

Fair faces come again,
As at sunseting
The stars without number;
Or as dreams dreamed in vain
To a heart forgetting
Come back with slumber.

Love covered both my eyes
In a sweet twilight
With his two hands folded;
Foolish to be most wise,
In the light of thy light
See as my soul did!

O Love, that, seeing all,
Sweetly dost cover
The eyes of thy loved ones,
Let me no more recall
The dim hours over
And the one face loved once!

But, having long been blind,
To behold those graces
I have lost with love now,
Let me behold and find
If all fair faces
In the world are enough now!

The Last Pity.

Now I have seen your face,
My tears are all for you.
Where are the lonely grace,
The pride, the lovely ways I knew?

The flower that blossomed fair
When winds and clouds arrayed
The shadows of the air,
Plucked, though with jealous care, must fade.

And in your wintry eyes,
With re-awakenings moved
A moment, I surprise
Nostalgia of the skies they loved.

Old sorrows I have borne
In patience for your sake,
Not without help of scorn:
From dreams, now twice forlorn, I wake.

I hear the old sorrows call,
Now, from your heart alone;
And scorn's relief recall
With pity which is all your own.

Wanderer's Song.

I have had enough of women, and enough of love,
But the land waits, and the sea waits, and day and night is
enough;
Give me a long white road, and the grey wide path of the sea,
And the wind's will and the bird's will, and the heart-ache
still in me.

Why should I seek out sorrow, and give gold for strife?
I have loved much and wept much, but tears and love are
not life;
The grass calls to my heart, and the foam to my blood cries up,
And the sun shines and the road shines, and the wine's in
the cup.

I have had enough of wisdom, and enough of mirth,
For the way's one and the end's one, and it's soon to the
ends of the earth;
And it's then good-night and to bed, and if heels or heart ache,
Well, it's sound sleep and long sleep, and sleep too deep to
wake.

Epilogue.

O little waking hour of life out of sleep!
When I consider the many million years
I was not yet, and the many million years
I shall not be, it is easy to think of the sleep
I shall sleep for the second time without hopes or fears.
Surely my sleep for the million years was deep?
I remember no dreams from the million years, and it seems
I may sleep for as many million years without dreams.

THE LOOM OF DREAMS.

The Loom of Dreams.

I broider the world upon a loom,
I broider with dreams my tapestry ;
Here in a little lonely room
I am master of earth and sea,
And the planets come to me.

I broider my life into the frame,
I broider my love, thread upon thread ;
The world goes by with its glory and shame,
Crowns are bartered and blood is shed :
I sit and broider my dreams instead.

And the only world is the world of my dreams,
And my weaving the only happiness ;
For what is the world but what it seems ?
And who knows but that God, beyond our guess,
Sits weaving worlds out of loneliness ?

The Grey Wolf.

The grey wolf comes again : I had made fast
The door with chains ; how has the grey wolf passed
My threshold ? I have nothing left to give :
Go from me now, grey wolf, and let me live !
I have fed you once, given all you would, given all
I had to give, I have been prodigal ;
I am poor now, the table is but spread
With water and a little wheaten bread ;
You have taken all I ever had from me :
Go from me now, grey wolf, and let me be !

The grey wolf, crouching by the bolted door,
Waits, watching for his food upon the floor ;
I see the old hunger and the old thirst of blood
Rise up, under his eyelids, like a flood :
What shall I do that the grey wolf may go ?
This time, I have no store of meat to throw ;
He waits ; but I have nothing, and I stand
Helpless, and his eyes fasten on my hand.
O grey wolf, grey wolf, will you not depart,
This time, unless I feed you with my heart ?

The Desire of Life.

O broken, old, weary desire of life,
Unquenchable flame of desire,
That wakens, like a well-nigh wasted fire,
Now in my heart, and springs
Upward on shining wings,
And stirs rejoicing for the unending strife,
Flame of desire,
Flame of the unquenchable desire of life,
What vehement spirit brings
Hope to my soul that had forgotten hope?
Is life yet waiting me,
That dumbly and disconsolately grope
Among dead things,
Chained living to the corpse of memory?
Bid me not stir
Out of the heavy shadow that impends
Sullenly on my head.
If this be but some mocking messenger,
Not life but fancy sends
To draw me from the places of the dead
To a forgotten sunlight where all ends?
Bid me not stir,
If all shall be again
As all has been: I have no heart to win
A glorious joy that shall return to pain
Ere I have drunk its sweetness in.
Nay, leave me quite alone,
Life, and the old, aching desire of life,
Apart from peace, apart from strife,

In this dull apathy
That I have somehow known
Since dead desire has claimed me for its own.
And yet, and yet,
If this be very life that comes to me,
If this bright voice that cries "Hope and forget!"
Be verily the voice of my own heart,
Wiser than I,
Shall I, that hunger, set the spread feast by,
Or, thirsting, bid the cupbearer depart?
O Life, dear enemy,
My soul so dimly understands,
Awakening in its cereclothes among the dead,
Life, that so long hast had thy will of me,
Do with me as thou wilt;
I hold both hands out for the cup,
I hold both hands out famishing for bread;
And shall thy cup be spilt,
And shall the bread crumble out of my hands,
O Life, dear friend, so like an enemy?

The Ecstasy.

What is this reverence in extreme delight
That waits upon my kisses as they storm,
Vehemently, this height
Of steep and inaccessible delight;
And seems with newer ecstasy to warm
Their slackening ardour, and invite,
From nearer heaven, the swarm
Of hiving stars with mortal sweetness down?
Never before
Have I endured an exaltation
So exquisite in anguish, and so sore
In promise and possession of full peace.
Cease not, O nevermore
Cease,
To lift my joy, as upon windy wings,
Into that infinite ascension, where,
In baths of glittering air,
It finds a heaven and like an angel sings.
Heaven waits above,
There where the clouds and fastnesses of love
Lift earth into the skies;
And I have seen the glimmer of the gates,
And twice or thrice
Climbed half the difficult way,
Only to say
Heaven waits,
Only to fall away from paradise.
But now, O what is this
Mysterious and uncapturable bliss

That I have never known, yet seems to be
Simple as breath, and easy as a smile,
And older than the earth?
Now but a little while
This ultimate ecstasy
Has parted from its birth,
Now but a little while been wholly mine,
Yet am I utterly possessed
By the delicious tyrant and divine
Child, this importunate guest.

Beata Beatrix.

Lay your head back ; and now, kiss me again !
Kneel there, and do not kiss me ; let me hold
Your cheeks between my hands ; your cheeks are cold,
And all your chin tightens, as if with pain,
And your eyes close upon the ecstasy,
Like one who dies in the agony of peace.
So I have seen the face of Beatrice,
In pictures, dead, and in a memory
Seeing the face of Dante out of heaven.
O, out of heaven, when for my sake you lean,
Till not a breath of the world may come between
Our lips that are our souls, and all the seven
Delighted heavens lean down with you, to bless
The sacrament of joy, then, with such eyes,
Closed on so still a new-born Paradise,
You endure the martyrdom of happiness.

The Flag.

I lay a tattered flag before your feet
In sign of conquest. Conquerors are proud
Of a rent flag : each mouth that cries aloud
Cries of a battle now twice won ; defeat
Gives up the right to every victory.
It is my life : I bring it torn and stained
Out of the battles I have lost and gained ;
Once captured, won back from the enemy
At a great loss ; yet, here I hold it still,
My own, to render up as now I do ;
I render it up joyfully to you,
Choosing defeat : do with it as you will.

Invocation.

I pray to the old kindness of the Earth,
Which is a spirit moving in the world,
Closer to life than human life, and deep
Beyond the beating of our passionate hearts,
That are too troubled with the pain of love
To be kind always : O, be kind to her,
She is so close to you, Earth of the winds !
There is a healing pity in your heart,
For us who are so soon weary of joy,
And half in love with sorrow : but she is joy ;
Be to her the eternal thirst, that is
Itself the drinking of renewed delight !
She is the wildest little wave of the sea,
She is the topmost branch that nods in the sun,
And she is sister to the flying wings ;
She breathes as if the whole earth breathed in her
Vehement breaths, rocking a constant breast ;
She has the lifted angers of the hawk,
In gladness, and the tiger's purity ;
Her body is as simple as the grass.
O she is close to you, Earth of the winds !
Be near her, be a grave and ancient peace,
As of a mother, comfortingly kind,
Who loves, and has no fear, and understands ;
Be to her love in beauty, for she loves
Beauty, a kindness in the natural air.
Your children love her : horses love her hand,
The dog gives up his rebel's heart to her,
And the luxurious wisdom of the cat

Approves her, in a delicate-footed choice ;
Your children love her, giving love for love.
She is your child too ; follow, follow her
Where I may never follow ; be to her
All I would be if this poor mortal love,
This little flame that lights and cannot warm,
Like a poor lonely candle all night long
Seen in a garret-window flickering,
Were mighty and immortal as the sun.
Follow her thou, and if her heart forget
That she has ever shared with me her joy,
Do thou remember always, as my heart
Remembers, and be happiness to her,
Though happiness were in forgetting me.

Song of Love's Coming.

Love comes unawares
(In my arms sighing).
Ah me, the many cares
Between his birth and dying !

Love comes like a child
(In my arms sighing).
Ah me, the hearts beguiled
Between his birth and dying !

Love comes and will not go
(In my arms sighing).
Ah me, the heart's woe
Mine until my dying !

The Adoration.

Why have you brought me myrrh
And frankincense and gold ?
Lay at the feet of her
Whom you have loved of old
Your frankincense and gold.

I have brought frankincense
And myrrh and gold to you
From weary lands far hence
That I have journeyed through
To come at last to you.

I cannot take your gold
And frankincense and myrrh ;
My heart was growing cold
While you were following her :
Take back your gold and myrrh.

Too late I come to you
With prayers of frankincense.
Pure gold, sweet myrrh, ye too,
Scorned, must go hence, far hence
As smoking frankincense.

The One Desire.

If I think of your soul, I see
Your body's beauty ; and then
I pray to your body again,
And your soul answers me.
So to possess you whole,
Two-fold ever the same,
Come to me light or flame,
Come to me body or soul !

The Alchemy.

No, we are strangers yet ;
The divine alchemy
Not yet, or vainly, has set
Our longing currents free.

We meet, what loving foes,
Who vainly would combine
Cross virtues, that dispose
The draught to be divine.

Waiting we know not what,
Lonely, and side by side,
Desiring only not
To part, yet not to abide,

We linger, each aware
Of that which both have missed,
And pitying the despair
Of the proud alchemist.

Sleep.

What is good for fever, except sleep ?
What is good for love, but to forget ?
Bury love deep,
Deeper than sound sleep,
And let
Fever drowse a little, and the heart forget.

Time shall heal fever, if death come not ;
What shall heal love, except only death ?
Though joy be forgot,
If death quiet not
Thy breath,
Time shall waken sorrow in the heart till death.

The Shadow.

When I am walking sadly or triumphantly,
With eyes that brood upon the smouldering thought of you,
And long desire and brief delight leap up anew,
Why is it that the eyes of all men turn to me?
There's pity in the eyes of women as they turn,
And in the eyes of men self-pity, fear, desire:
As those who see the far-off shadow of a fire
Gaze earnestly, and wonder if their rooftrees burn.

Rest.

The peace of a wandering sky,
Silence, only the cry
Of the crickets, suddenly still,
A bee on the window-sill,
A bird's wing, rushing and soft,
Three flails that tramp in the loft,
Summer murmuring
Some sweet, slumberous thing,
Half asleep; but thou, cease,
Heart, to hunger for peace,
Or, if thou must find rest,
Cease to beat in my breast.

Isolation.

When your lips seek my lips they bring
That sorrowful and outcast thing,
My heart, home from its wandering.

Then, ere your lips have loosed their hold,
I feel my heart's heat growing cold,
And my heart shivers and grows old.

When your lips leave my lips, again
I feel the old doubt and the old pain
Tighten about me like a chain.

After the pain, after the doubt,
A lonely darkness winds about
My soul like death, and shuts you out.

The Prayer.

Dear, if I might love better for your sake,
I would not care though you should love me less;
I love you more than to consent to take
Happiness and not give you happiness.

Though I were happier if you loved me more,
And happier if I loved you less, I pray
That though each day less than the day before
You love me, I may love you more each day.

The Blind Heart.

Be still, O hunger of heart, and let pity speak :
Her soul is a wandering bird, and its wings are weak,
Her heart is a little flame, it pants at a sigh;
O blind and pitiless heart, it is love going by.

If I had only pity, and a little rest,
Peace as a rose would blossom again in my breast;
If I had only patience, and let love free,
As a bird to its nest, my love would come to me.

But I have neither patience nor pity at all,
And I hold her heart in my hand, and I let it fall;
I hold the joy of my life in my heart, and I seem
As one who walks and lament in a mournful dream.

Love and Sorrow.

I know not if the love be dead
I sang of once, or only asleep ;
The feet of my joy no longer tread
In the pulses of my heart : is this
The measure that they used to keep ?
Now all the old tunes are sung amiss,
And all the old words they said are said ;
Is it that the old love is dead,
Or sleeps, and will awaken from sleep ?

O love, not dead, so soon to awake,
Too idle-happy to know content,
Sorrow has come : come, sorrow, make
The feet of my joy remember soon ;
My heart remembers the words that went,
Once, to an old and happy tune,
When love was grave, for no sorrow's sake ;
Shall love, that slept, again be awake,
And this kind sorrow bring back content ?

The Desire of the Heart.

Heart, is there anything to desire ?

Feet, is there anywhere to go ?

A way for the feet, where the winds blow

The dust from the heart, and a way for the heart

Where the kindness of love shall never tire,

Nor the feet be tired with the length of the way ?

Shall the heart stay and the feet stay,

And the voice of the wind crying : Depart ?

O my heart, O my feet, rest, be at rest !

They are tired, they are tired of wandering.

O my heart, O my feet, is there anything

Worth the desire out of all that is ?

Wandering ones, quiet is best,

Cover the thoughts and the voices deep,

And let me bind my feet with a sleep,

And blind my heart with a sleepy kiss !

The Prison.

I am the prisoner of my love of you.
I pace my soul, as prisoned culprits do,
You stand like any gaoler at the gate,
And I am fevered, chill, and desolate,
Weary with walking the damp dungeon-floor,
Cursing your name, and loving you the more
For crying curses. If I could but keep
Your thought away but just enough to sleep
One calm night through, I might enjoy the stars ;
But now I see beyond my prison-bars,
Night and day, nothing ; only iron rust,
And windows blackened over with wet dust.

While I was slumbering, half awake, I heard
A voice that spoke a little poisonous word,
Subtly against my ear ; it said that all
These barred inventions are fantastical,
These four unfriendly walls I touch and see,
A wilful dream and no reality,
And that I need but waken to be free.
A cunning but a foolish voice ! I know
Your walls are solid, stablished long ago,
Not for one only : here's name after name,
Carved on the stones : I'll add my name to them.

Outside, I hear, sometimes, far off yet loud,
A sound as of the voices of a crowd,
And hands that beat against a gate ; I hear
Cries of revolt, and only only these I fear.

'Tis you they strike at: what have I to do
With freedom, if 'tis liberty from you?
I am content with this unhappiness;
Why should the world, that has no soul to guess
The joy and miracle of my distress,
Strive to break in, and ravish me from pain,
That, being lost, I should seek out again?

O, I was friends once with the world, I went
The world's way, and was sunnily content
Only to be a pilgrim, and to roam
The grey dust and the flying-footed foam.
My heart knew not of bondage, I was full
Of young desire, the earth was beautiful,
And women's faces were a light that showed
The way at every turning of the road,
And I had never looked as deep as tears
Into a woman's heart.

Unthinkable years,
I loitered through with scarce returning feet,
And dreamed that only freedom could be sweet!
How, in my prison, I stand pitying
That gipsy leisure for an idle thing,
A memory not worth remembering!
I am alone now, miserable, bound
With chains that crawl behind me on the ground,
Sleepless with hate and with the ache of thought,
My pride of triumph broken down and brought
Into a sullen quelled captivity:
Alas, I only fear to be set free!

The Regret.

It seems to me, dearest, if you were dead,
And thought returned to me after the tears,
The hopeless first oblivious tears, were shed,
That this would be the bitterest, not that I
Had lost for all sad hours of all my years
The joys enjoyed and happy hours gone by;
Ah no, but that while we had time to live
And love before the coming of the night,
Yet knew the hours of daylight fugitive,
Proud as a child who will not what he would,
Sometimes I did not love you as I might,
Sometimes you did not love me when you could.

The Bond.

O beloved, and stranger to me than my foe,
And nearer to me than my breath, and my peace and my strife,
What is it that binds us straitly together? Life;
Body to body: soul to soul, do I know?
I know that your hands speak to my hands, and my hands
Speak to your hands with an irresistible desire;
We are blown together as fire is blown into fire,
We return as the wandering tide returns to the sands.
Is it love, is it longing? I know not, care not, alas!
Something cries, and a cry answers a cry.
If I speak, you hear in your heart; when you call, it is I:
Soul of my life, let us live! for the hours pass.

The Sick Heart.

O sick heart, be at rest!
Is there nothing that I can do
To quiet your crying in my breast?
Will nothing comfort you?

"I am sick of a malady
There is but one thing can assuage:
Cure me of youth, and, see,
I will be wise in age!"

The Crying of Water.

O water, voice of my heart, crying in the sand,
All night long crying with a mournful cry,
As I lie and listen, and cannot understand
The voice of my heart in my side or the voice of the sea,
O water, crying for rest, is it I, is it I?
All night long the water is crying to me.

Unresting water, there shall never be rest
Till the last moon droop and the last tide fail,
And the fire of the end begin to burn in the west;
And the heart shall be weary and wonder and cry like the sea,
All life long crying without avail,
As the water all night long is crying to me.

Faustus and Helen.

FAUSTUS.

Why am I fettered with eternal change?
I follow after changeless love, and find
Nothing but change; I seek, and seem to find;
I find a shaken star within a pool;
A little water troubles it; I lean
Closer, and my own shadow blots it out.
Yet I desire the star, not this bright ghost.
I take a woman's heart into my hand;
It sighs for love, and trembles among sighs,
And half awakens into a delicate sleep,
And calls to me in whispers out of dreams.
Then the dream passes, and I too know I have dreamed.
No woman has found me faithless; it is she
Who shows me my own image in her eyes,
And in my own eyes finds a shadowy friend
That is her own desire beholding her.
Now I have followed wisdom long enough;
Wisdom is changeless, but a barren thing;
I desire love, and peace with love, and love
Without this mortal penalty of change.
Why is it that the world was made so ill,
Or we that suffer it, or this soul its toy,
This body that is the image of the world,
Made ill, or made for a pastime? he that made it
Loved not the thing he made, or tired of it,
Or could not end it; for he gave us life,
And the body, and therewith he gave us dreams;
And having made one substance of the soul

And body, wrought division, and flung his war
Into the little passionate city of man.
Yet, if this little city full of foes
Could cast out dreams, these strong invading dreams,
Might we not take kind peace into our midst?
Peace without love there may not be; and yet
I have read in books that love may come with rest,
Love may desire and yet be satisfied,
Love may brim up the body's need of love
And leave the soul unhurt: it is this soul
That cries in us, and suffers, and kills content;
The soul, a foolish vagabond thing, that strays
Wanton about the world, sleeps ill of nights,
Treads down the fruitful edges of the fields
That ripen towards a harvest, and lives on alms.
Could I but hold this slothful and restless soul
The prisoner of to-day, build up to-day
Into a rampart, shut to-morrow out,
Then I might live, and not run after life,
Then I might love, and not see only the pale
Vanishing of love in an uncapturable mist.
When Helen lived, men loved, and Helen was:
Did Helen dream, or men, seeing Helen, dream
Of more than Helen? O perfect beauty, made
Of mortal flesh for some immortal end,
To be the bride of every man's desire
While beauty is remembered, I do think
That Helen grew up with the growth of flowers,
And shared the simple, happy life of beasts,
Loved to be loved, and saw men die for her,
Not sorry, not astonished at their death,

A grave and happy woman. Helen is dead
These many thousand years; but what are years?
Time is the slave of thought; a little thought
Sets back the clock of the ages; this hour that strikes
Is not so sure for me as Helen's hour.
I call on Helen: Helen is the thought
I summon with; I form out of my soul
A bodily Helen, whom these eyes behold.

HELEN.

Have I slept long? You waken me from sleep.
I have forgotten something: what is it?

FAUSTUS.

There is much wisdom in your beauty; eyes,
That have looked deep into the hearts of men,
When men, setting their lips on them, forgot
All but desire of some forgetfulness,
Remember many secrets; your eyes are grave
With knowledge of the hearts of many men.

HELEN.

I have forgotten all; if I have looked
Into the hearts of men, I have but seen
A little eager world, like to my own,
A world my own has copied; they desire
That which I have to give them, I in them
Their own desire.

FAUSTUS.

They see you not; they see

Another phantom Helen in the soul,
And they desire what you can never give.

HELEN.

What is the soul, and what is that desire
Of man which Helen cannot satisfy?

FAUSTUS.

O Helen, we are sick, sick of the soul.
It is an ancient malady, and clings
About our blood these many thousand years.
We are born old, and this decrepit soul
Is like a child's inheritance, that pays
The price of others' pleasure; we are born old,
Old in the heart, and mournful in the brain,
Hunters of shadows, feeders on food of sleep,
Hoarding a little memory till it rots.
We have forgotten day, the instant day,
And that to-morrow never shall be ours.

HELEN.

To-morrow never need be ours; to-day
Is greater than the heart of any man.

FAUSTUS.

Nay, not enough to dream a whole dream out.

HELEN.

Have not great cities fallen in a day,
And great kings fallen, and the face of the earth

Changed? Is not love, greater than any king,
Born, brought to ripeness, earthed about with dust,
In a day's course? Needs death more than a day?

FAUSTUS.

Not love, not death, not cities, not great kings,
Only the little wayward heart of man.

HELEN.

I fold my arms about you, and I lay
My hair over your eyes ; I hush your lips
Against my heart : there are no sighs in it ;
It has forgotten Paris and the man
Whom Paris wronged ; how many thousand men
Have died for this poor face they never saw !
It has forgotten Troy. Shut your lids close
And feel my lips, they bend down over you :
Men have died hard in battle that these lips,
My husband had kissed often, might be kissed
By Paris : they are yours, they have not loved
The mouth of any lover in the world
More than they love your eyes ; your eyes were sad,
Before you shut them ; open your eyes now :
They have forgotten wisdom.

FAUSTUS.

Is it a dream ?
I have not seen that face except in dreams.

HELEN.

A little moment has gone over us,
And it is still to-day.

FAUSTUS.

I have slept long.

HELEN.

Do not awaken ; yet you have not slept ;
Now you are falling back into your sleep ;
Your eyes remember, they are sad again,
They have not wakened.

FAUSTUS.

An immortal sleep,
Gone in an instant ! I have dreamed a dream
Longer than all your years, and it is still
The same long day, and there are hours enough
To feed another dream out of our hearts.

HELEN.

Why do you dream if dreaming makes you sad ?
Why do you look at me as if you looked
Into a glass ?

FAUSTUS.

I do not know my face ;
I see a wintry bough toss in the wind
When I look close into your eyes. I am sad
Because your beauty is a consuming fire,
And it could set the world in flames, yet not
Burn out the dross of thought from this old heart.
A stranger sits and sees you with my eyes ;
Your lips have kissed them, and they see you still.

HELEN.

It is enough to look upon my face,
If you will look upon my face indeed,
And not at dreams that wither and turn to mist.

FAUSTUS.

O Helen, it is you that are the dream.
Have I not made you with my urgency,
Made you to my desire out of a mist?
I made you, and you mock me with your life.
I called you as a ghost out of a grave,
I gave you back the likeness of your flesh
Out of my soul, but only not a soul,
I gave you back the salt of life, your soul;
And I entreated you across the dark
And obscure ages, and you came to me,
Awakened, unastonished, out of death.
Ghost of dead Helen, teach me to be no more
The ghost of living Faustus!

HELEN.

Must I die twice?
For I remember dying long ago,
And I abhor death only of earthly ills,
Although it end all earthly ills at once.
Must I die twice?

FAUSTUS.

You must fade out again
Into the mist, and be a memory.

HELEN.

My beauty has been dust so many years
I know not how the memory of it lasts
Among men's minds so long. A woman's praise
Is ended shortly with her youth, and dies
Long before death: do men remember yet?
O Faustus, let me live! The one good thing
Is life, for there is nothing in the grave:
I have been dead, and there is nothing there;
We sleep, and cannot even say, we sleep.
I have loved life, I would live all my days
Twice over; there is nothing I desire
Except to live; death is the end of all:
But now I live, and I would never die.
And yet if death must come, I will die twice,
So I may live my life over again.

FAUSTUS.

The colour of the world is washed away,
Helen, and there is nothing in the world
Worth looking on; your eyes have looked on Greece.
Desire not life, there is no room for life,
There is no place for beauty in the world.
I did not call you hither for your peace,
Not for your peace, although I sought for peace
In finding you; and now I cannot find
The peace I sought; this prison of the world,
These massy walls, barred windows, iron bolts,
Would close upon you and suck out your breath
Like a slow sickness; but now rejoice, return
To the universal nothingness of air:
Depart, it is your freedom.

HELEN.

I go out

Into a great white darkness, and am afraid.

FAUSTUS.

When Helen lived, men loved, and Helen was:

I have seen Helen, Helen was a dream,

I dreamed of something not in Helen's eyes.

What shall the end of all things be? I wait

Cruel old age, and kinder death, and sleep.

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